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X-MEN™
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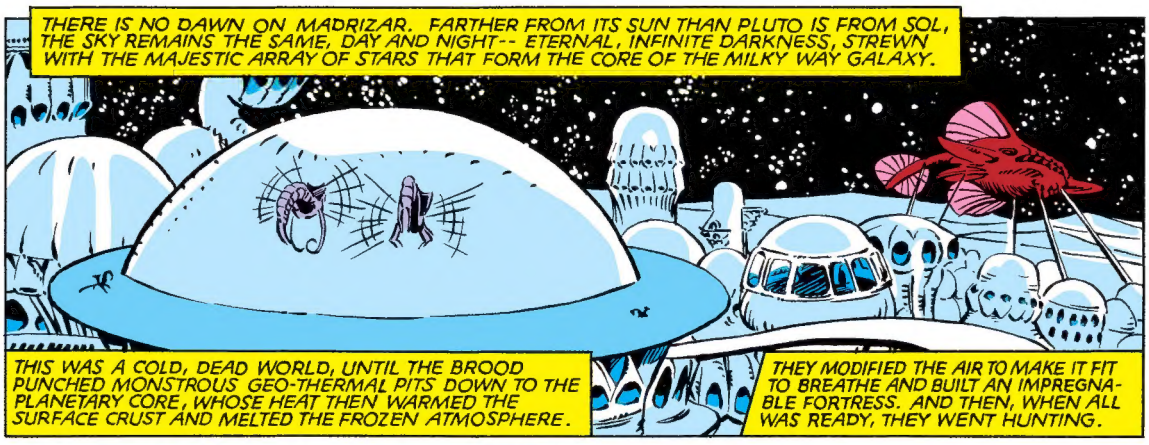

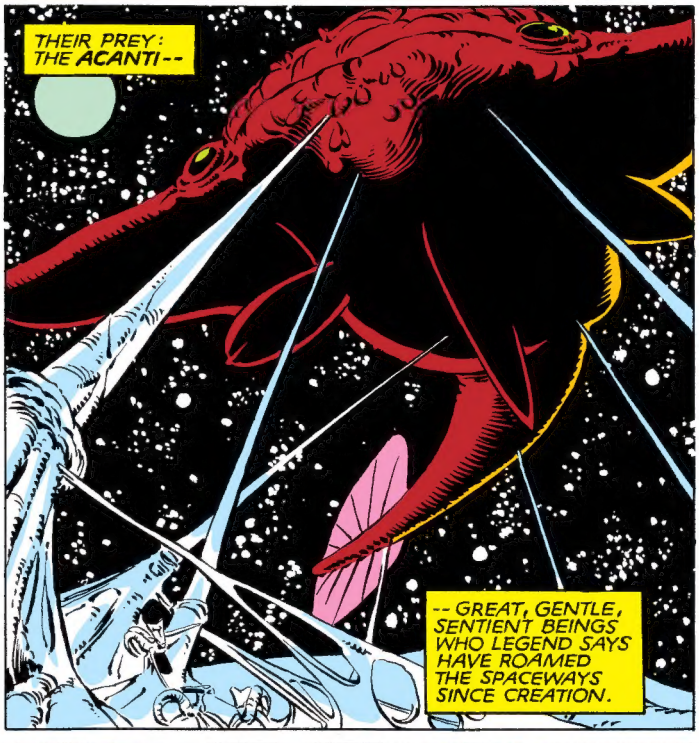

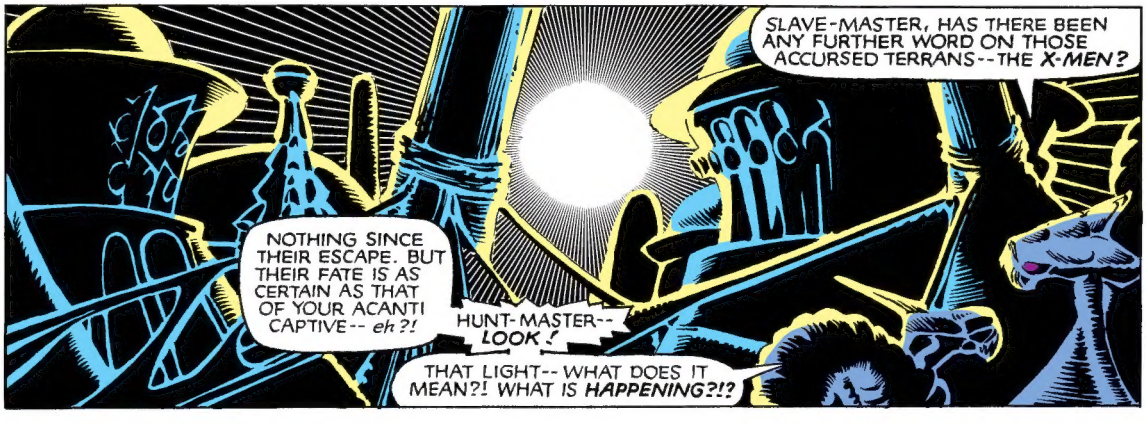

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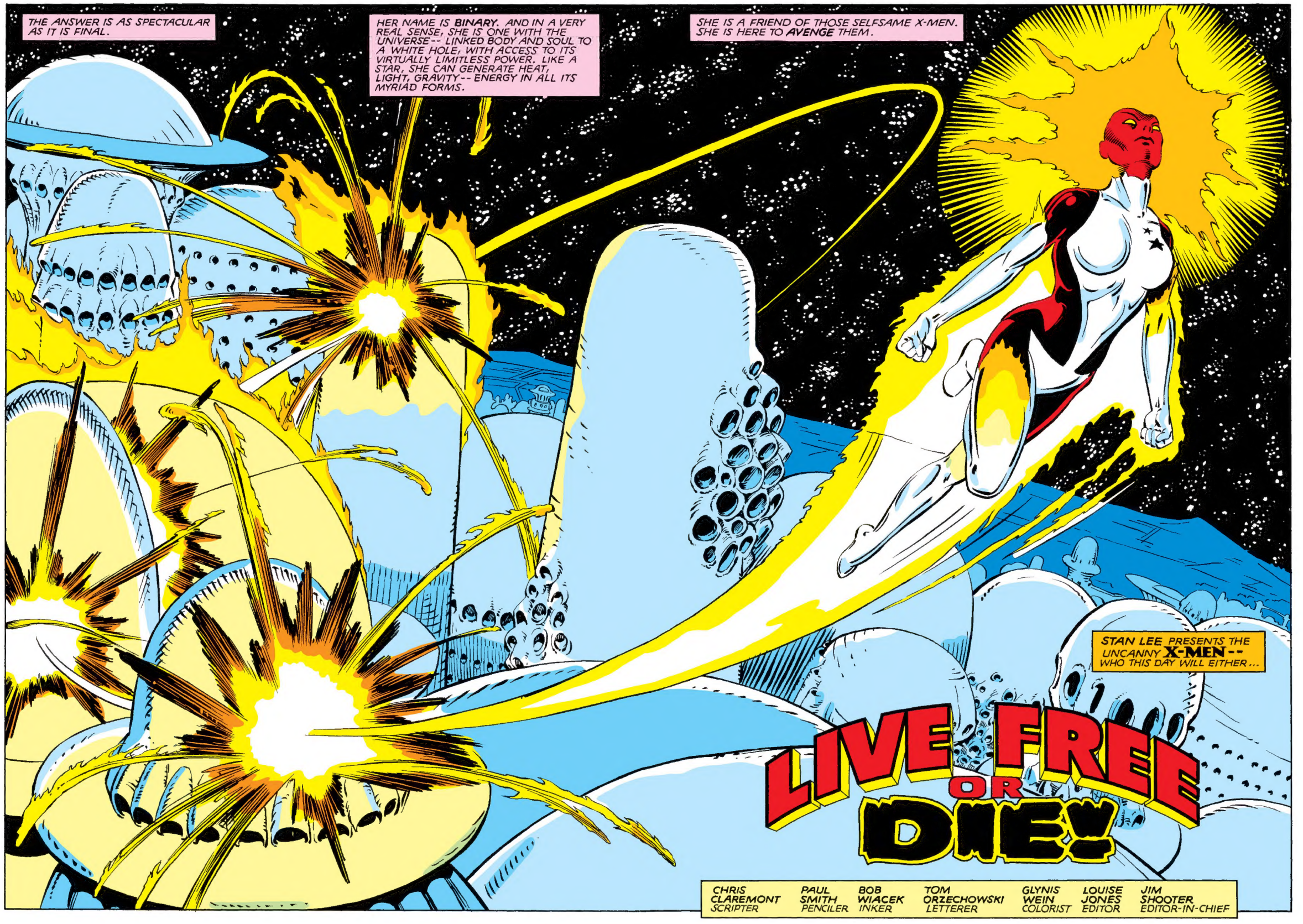
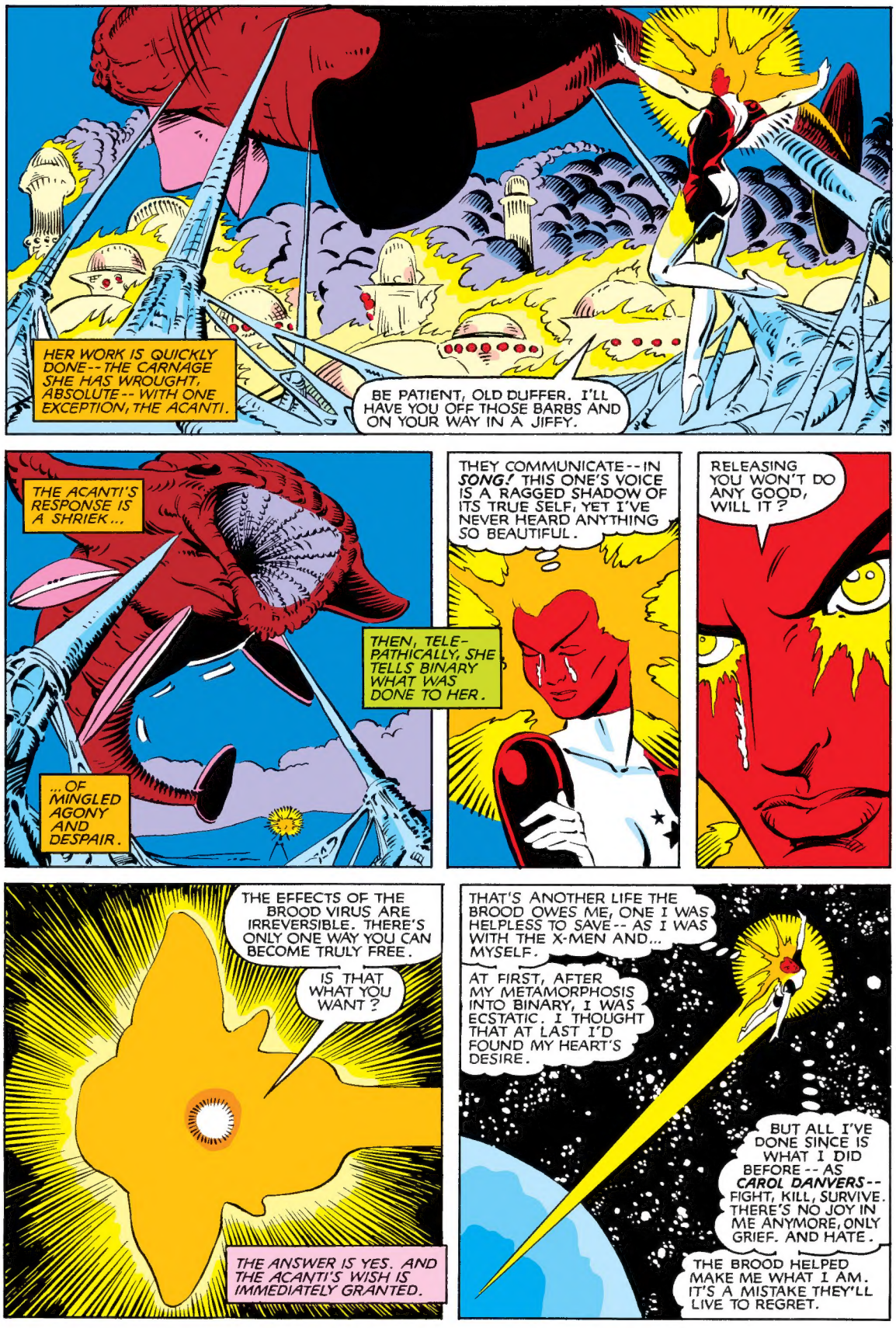
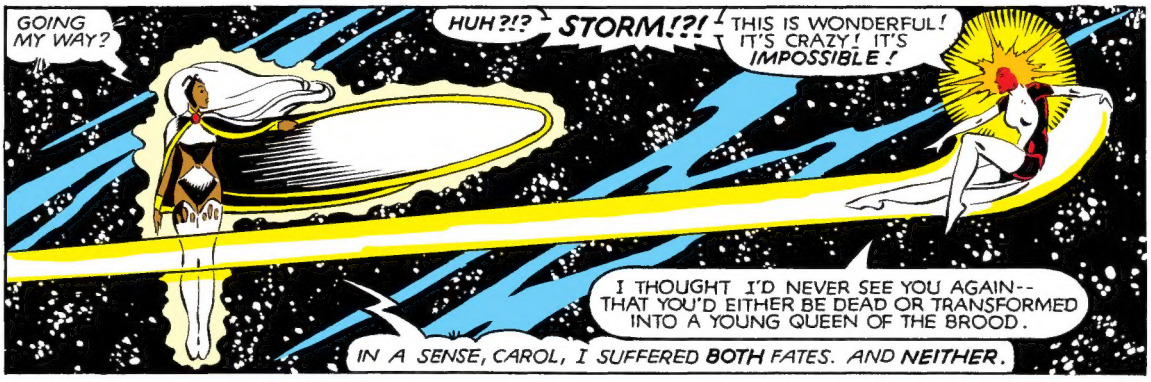
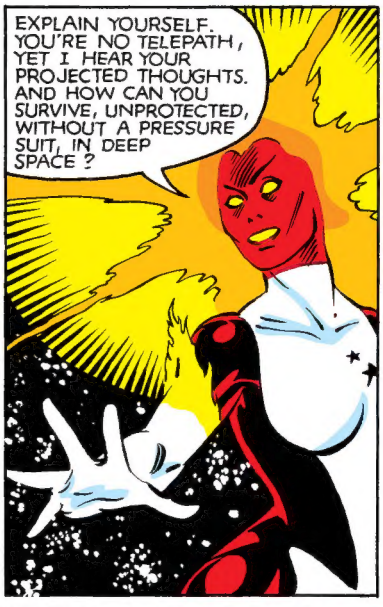
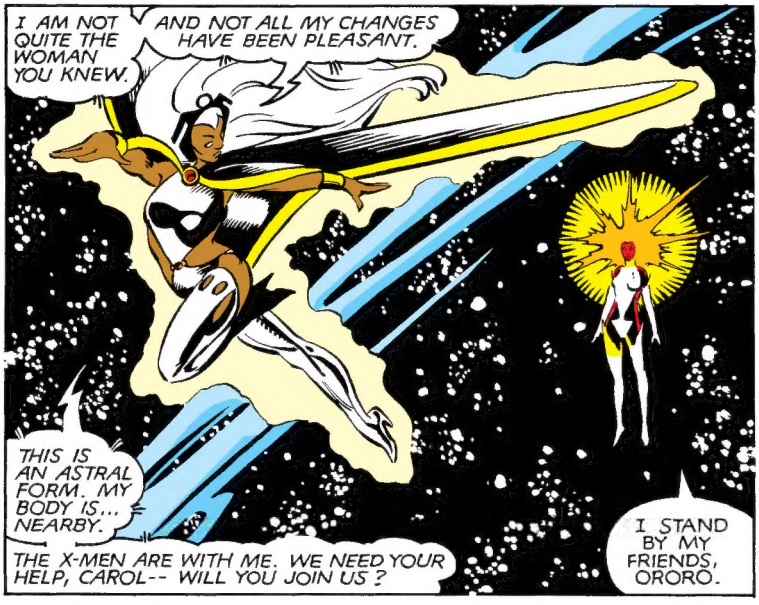

THE ANSWER IS AS SPECTACULAR AS IT IS FINAL.
HER NAME IS BINARY. AND IN A VERY REAL SENSE, SHE IS ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE-- LINKED BODY AND SOUL TO A WHITE HOLE, WITH ACCESS TO ITS VIRTUALLY LIMITLESS POWER. LIKE A STAR, SHE CAN GENERATE HEAT, LIGHT, GRAVITY-- ENERGY IN ALL ITS MYRIAD FORMS.
SHE IS A FRIEND OF THOSE SELFSAME X-MEN. SHE IS HERE TO AVENGE THEM.
STAN LEE PRESENTS THE UNCANNY X-MEN-- WHO THIS DAY WILL EITHER...
LIVE FREE OR DIE!
CHRIS CLAREMONT SCRIPTER
PAUL SMITH PENCILER
BOB WIACEK INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST
LOUISE JONES EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

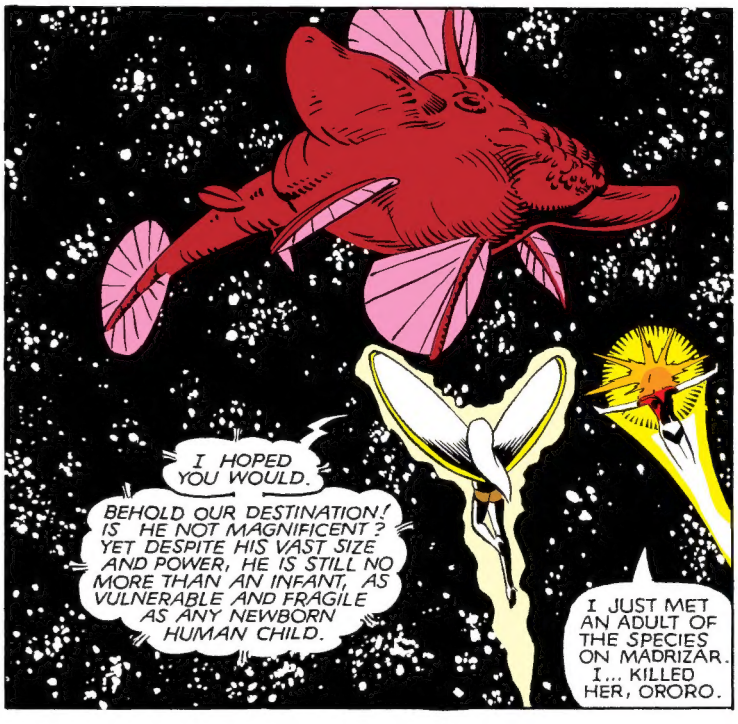
THE BROOD RESISTS...
... FOR ALL THE GOOD IT DOES THEM.

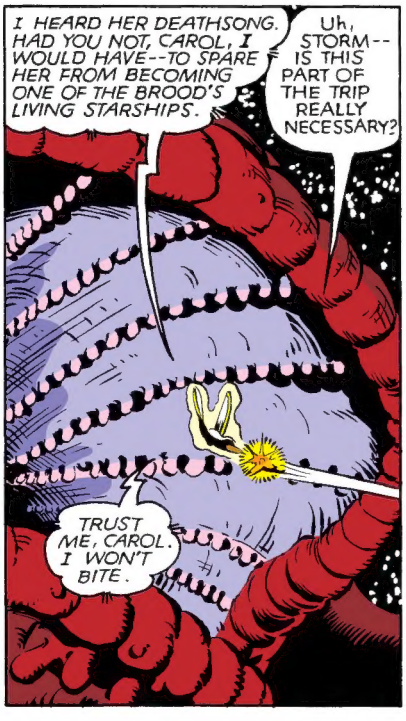

HER WORK IS QUICKLY DONE--THE CARNAGE SHE HAS WROUGHT, ABSOLUTE--WITH ONE EXCEPTION, THE ACANTI.
BE PATIENT, OLD DUFFER. I'LL HAVE YOU OFF THOSE BARBS AND ON YOUR WAY IN A JIFFY.
THE ACANTI'S RESPONSE IS A SHRIEK...
...OF MINGLED AGONY AND DESPAIR.
THEN, TELE-PATHICALLY, SHE TELLS BINARY WHAT WAS DONE TO HER.
THEY COMMUNICATE--IN SONG! THIS ONE'S VOICE IS A RAGGED SHADOW OF ITS TRUE SELF, YET I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING SO BEAUTIFUL.
RELEASING YOU WON'T DO ANY GOOD, WILL IT?
THE EFFECTS OF THE BROOD VIRUS ARE IRREVERSIBLE. THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY YOU CAN BECOME TRULY FREE.
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?
THE ANSWER IS YES. AND THE ACANTI'S WISH IS IMMEDIATELY GRANTED.
THAT'S ANOTHER LIFE THE BROOD OWES ME, ONE I WAS HELPLESS TO SAVE--AS I WAS WITH THE X-MEN AND... MYSELF.
AT FIRST, AFTER MY METAMORPHOSIS INTO BINARY, I WAS ECSTATIC. I THOUGHT THAT AT LAST I'D FOUND MY HEART'S DESIRE.
BUT ALL I'VE DONE SINCE IS WHAT I DID BEFORE--AS CAROL DANVERS--FIGHT, KILL, SURVIVE. THERE'S NO JOY IN ME ANYMORE, ONLY GRIEF. AND HATE.
THE BROOD HELPED MAKE ME WHAT I AM. IT'S A MISTAKE THEY'LL LIVE TO REGRET.

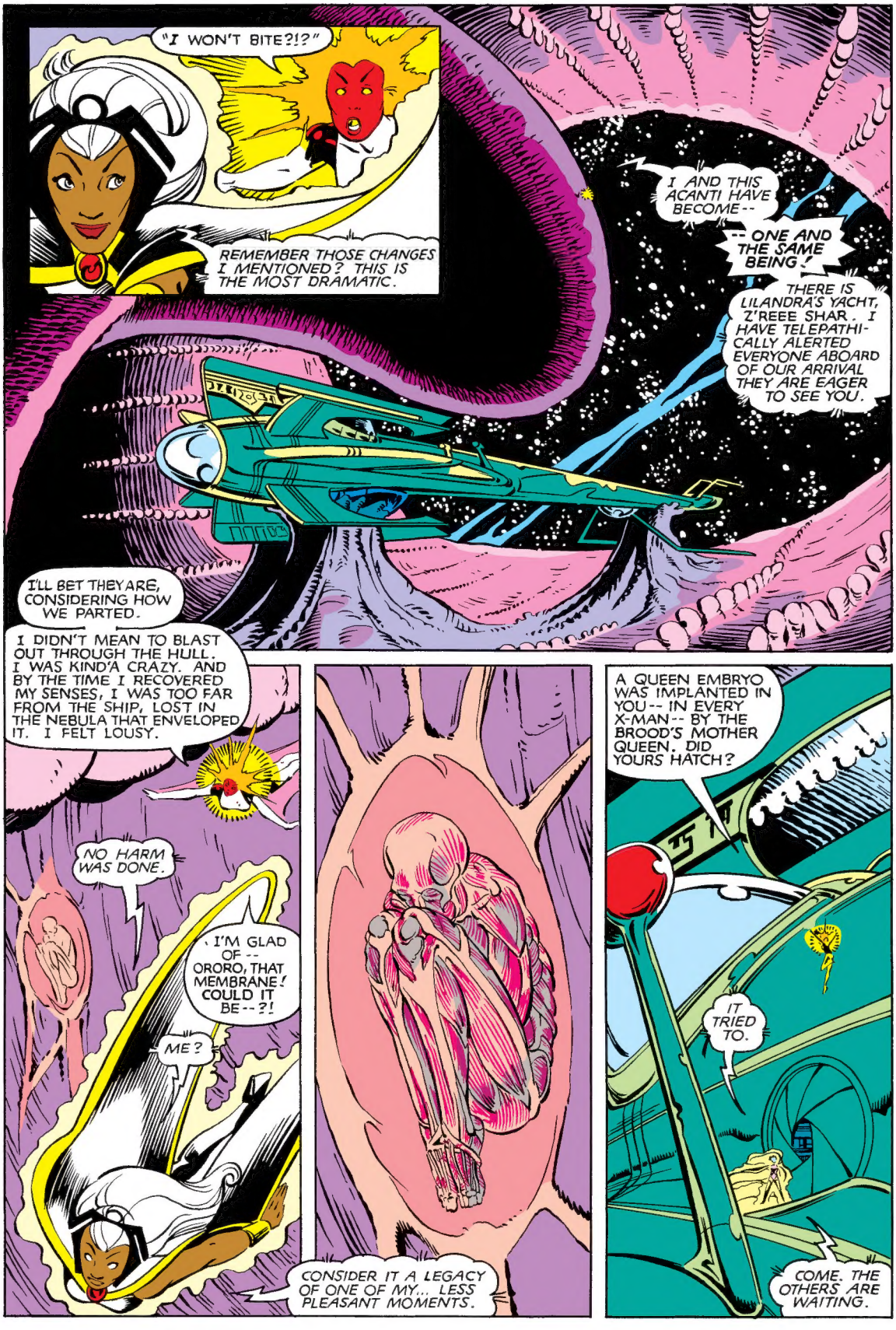

GOING MY WAY?
HUH?!?
STORM!?!
THIS IS WONDERFUL! IT'S CRAZY! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN-- THAT YOU'D EITHER BE DEAD OR TRANSFORMED INTO A YOUNG QUEEN OF THE BROOD.
IN A SENSE, CAROL, I SUFFERED BOTH FATES. AND NEITHER.


EXPLAIN YOURSELF. YOU'RE NO TELEPATH, YET I HEAR YOUR PROJECTED THOUGHTS. AND HOW CAN YOU SURVIVE, UNPROTECTED, WITHOUT A PRESSURE SUIT, IN DEEP SPACE?

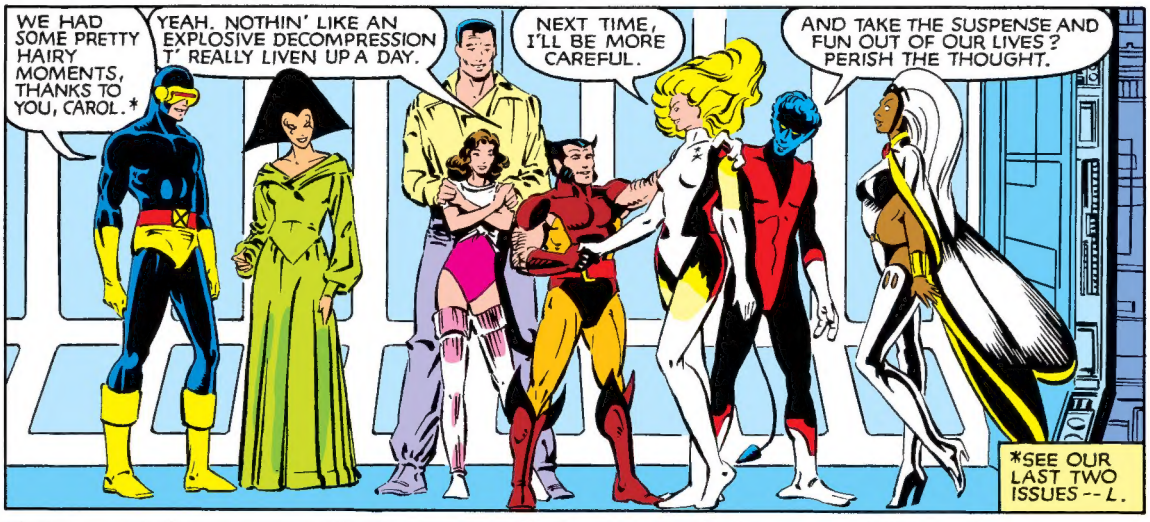

I AM NOT QUITE THE WOMAN YOU KNEW.
AND NOT ALL MY CHANGES HAVE BEEN PLEASANT.
THIS IS AN ASTRAL FORM. MY BODY IS... NEARBY.
THE X-MEN ARE WITH ME. WE NEED YOUR HELP, CAROL-- WILL YOU JOIN US?
I STAND BY MY FRIENDS, ORORO.

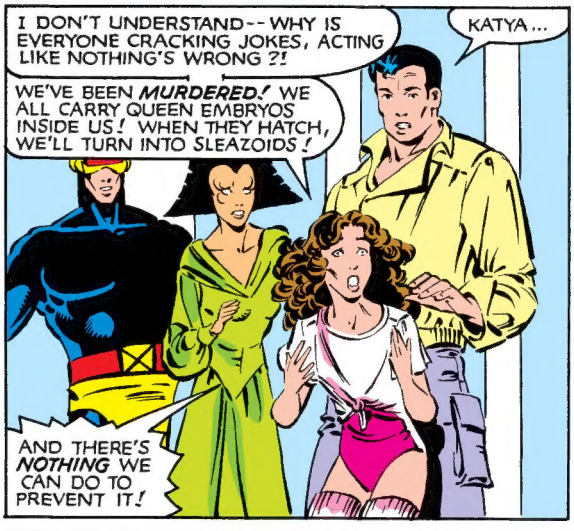

I HOPED YOU WOULD.
BEHOLD OUR DESTINATION! IS HE NOT MAGNIFICENT? YET DESPITE HIS VAST SIZE AND POWER, HE IS STILL NO MORE THAN AN INFANT, AS VULNERABLE AND FRAGILE AS ANY NEWBORN HUMAN CHILD.
I JUST MET AN ADULT OF THE SPECIES ON MADRIZAR. I... KILLED HER, ORORO.

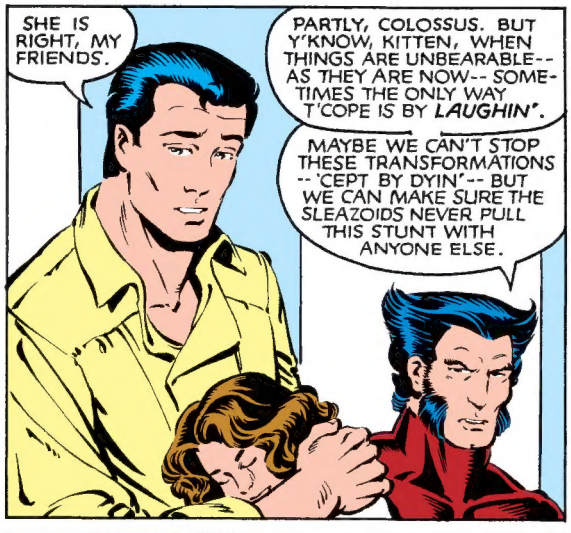

I HEARD HER DEATHSONG. HAD YOU NOT, CAROL, I WOULD HAVE--TO SPARE HER FROM BECOMING ONE OF THE BROOD'S LIVING STARSHIPS.
Uh, STORM-- IS THIS PART OF THE TRIP REALLY NECESSARY?
TRUST ME, CAROL. I WON'T BITE.

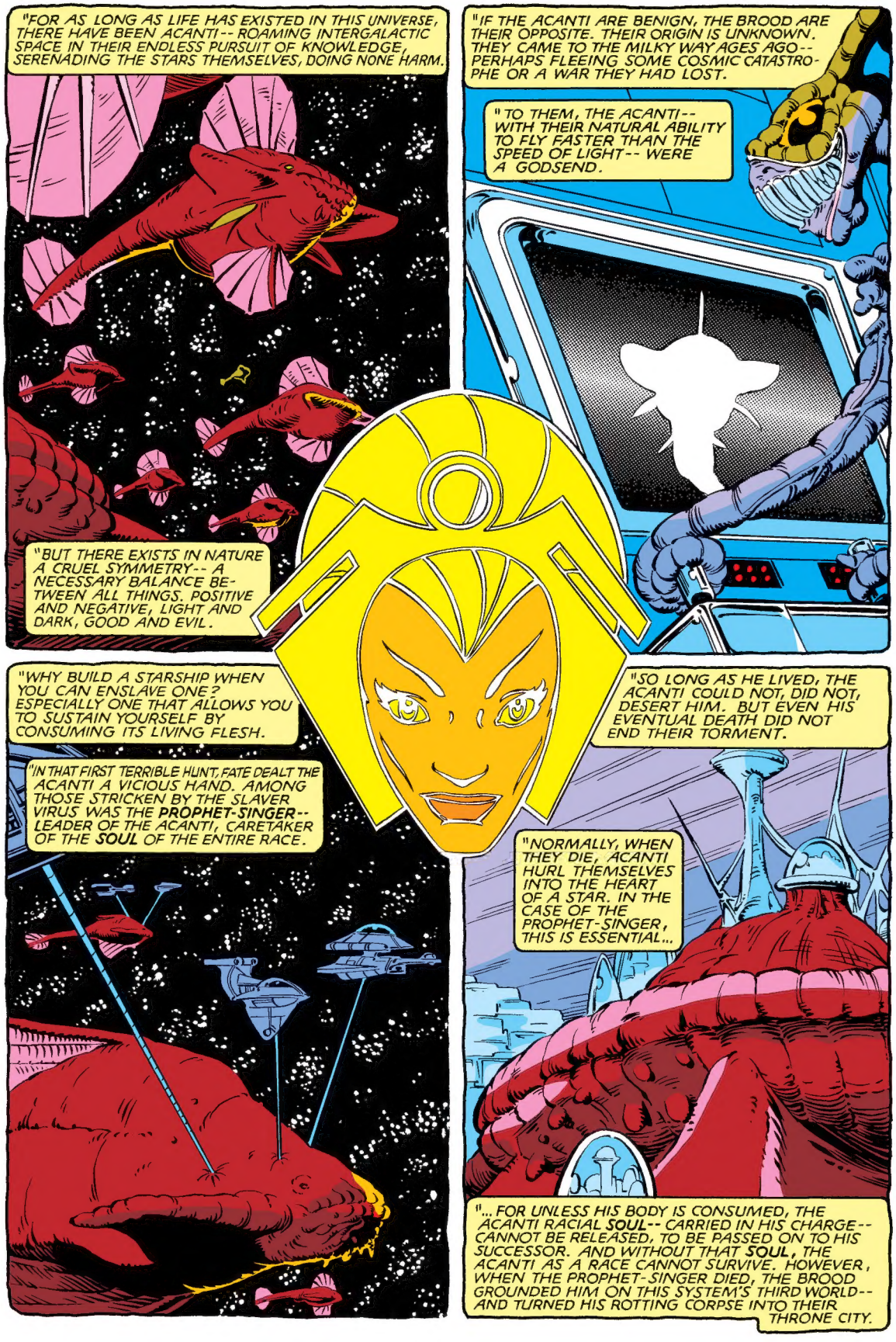

"I WON'T BITE?!?"
REMEMBER THOSE CHANGES I MENTIONED? THIS IS THE MOST DRAMATIC.
I AND THIS ACANTI HAVE BECOME--
-- ONE AND THE SAME BEING!
THERE IS LILANDRA'S YACHT, Z'REEE SHAR. I HAVE TELEPATHICALLY ALERTED EVERYONE ABOARD OF OUR ARRIVAL THEY ARE EAGER TO SEE YOU.
I'LL BET THEY ARE, CONSIDERING HOW WE PARTED.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO BLAST OUT THROUGH THE HULL. I WAS KIND'A CRAZY. AND BY THE TIME I RECOVERED MY SENSES, I WAS TOO FAR FROM THE SHIP, LOST IN THE NEBULA THAT ENVELOPED IT. I FELT LOUSY.
NO HARM WAS DONE.
I'M GLAD OF -- ORORO, THAT MEMBRANE! COULD IT BE--?!
ME?
CONSIDER IT A LEGACY OF ONE OF MY... LESS PLEASANT MOMENTS.
A QUEEN EMBRYO WAS IMPLANTED IN YOU-- IN EVERY X-MAN-- BY THE BROOD'S MOTHER QUEEN. DID YOURS HATCH?
IT TRIED TO.
COME. THE OTHERS ARE WAITING.

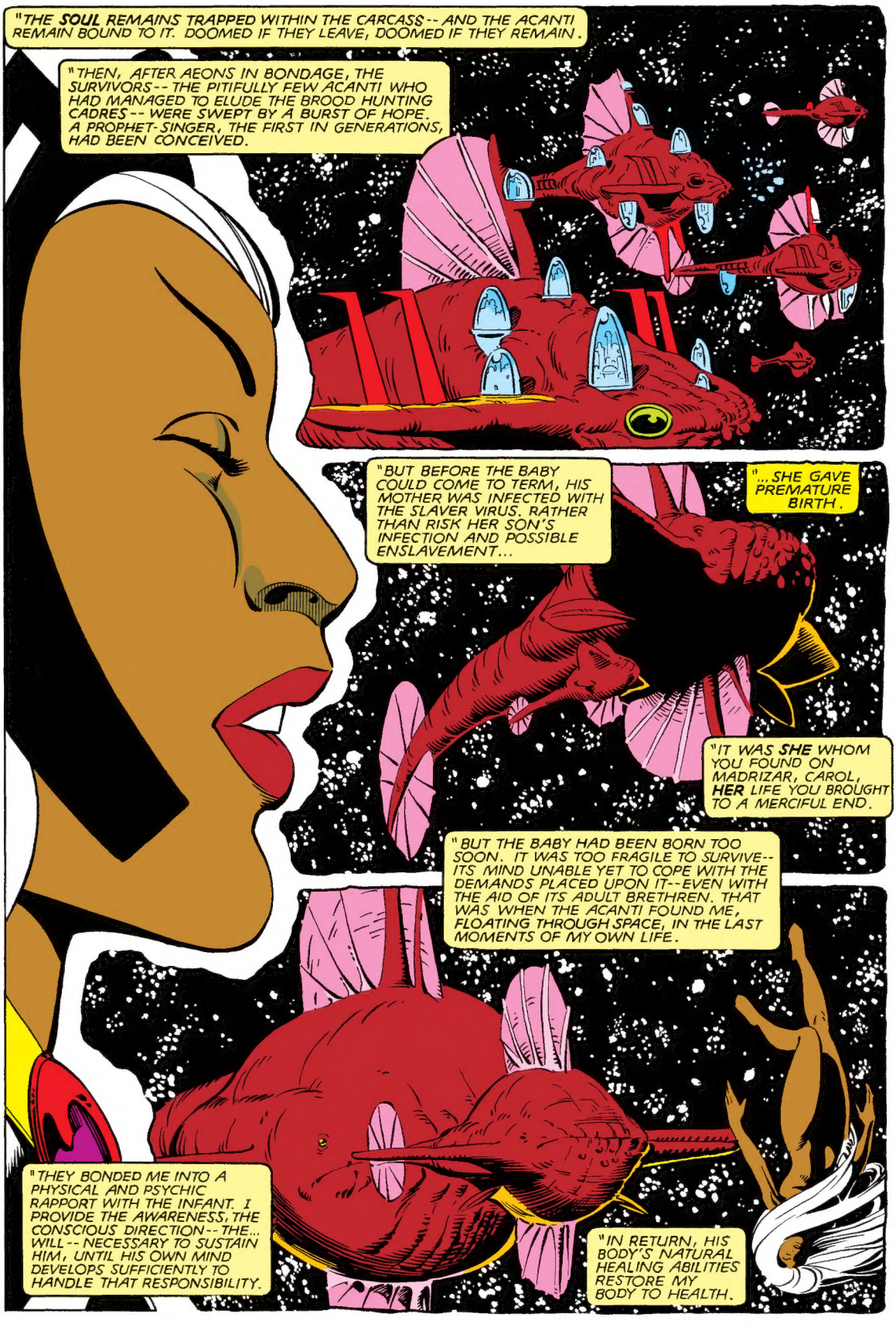
SIX LOST SOULS: ONE ALIEN, **LILANDRA**, EXPATRIATE RULER OF THE GALAXY-SPANNING SHI'AR EMPIRE, AND FIVE HUMAN-- **CYCLOPS, COLOSSUS, KITTY PRYDE, WOLVERINE** AND **NIGHTCRAWLER**-- MUTANTS, GIFTED WITH ABILITIES THAT SET THEM APART FROM THE REST OF THEIR SPECIES, FORGED INTO A TEAM OF UNSUNG, OCCASIONALLY OUTLAW, HEROES KNOWN AS THE **X-MEN**.



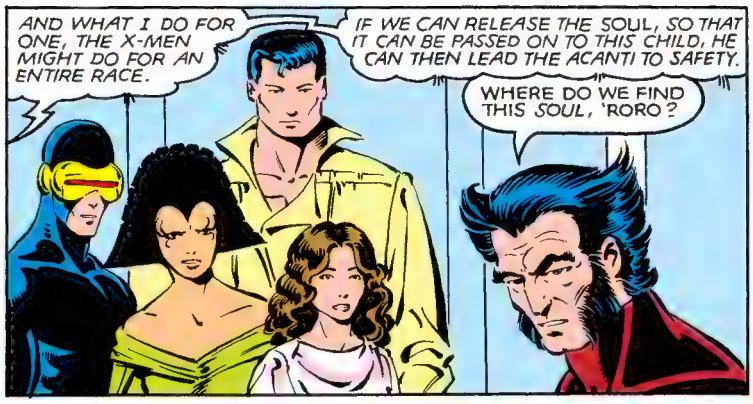


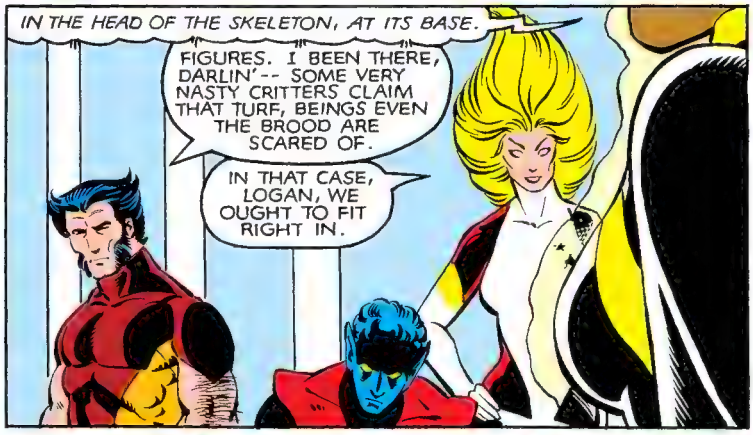



"FOR AS LONG AS LIFE HAS EXISTED IN THIS UNIVERSE, THERE HAVE BEEN ACANTI -- ROAMING INTERGALACTIC SPACE IN THEIR ENDLESS PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE, SERENADING THE STARS THEMSELVES, DOING NONE HARM.
"BUT THERE EXISTS IN NATURE A CRUEL SYMMETRY -- A NECESSARY BALANCE BETWEEN ALL THINGS. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, LIGHT AND DARK, GOOD AND EVIL.
"IF THE ACANTI ARE BENIGN, THE BROOD ARE THEIR OPPOSITE. THEIR ORIGIN IS UNKNOWN. THEY CAME TO THE MILKY WAY AGES AGO -- PERHAPS FLEEING SOME COSMIC CATASTROPHE OR A WAR THEY HAD LOST.
"TO THEM, THE ACANTI -- WITH THEIR NATURAL ABILITY TO FLY FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT -- WERE A GODSEND.
"WHY BUILD A STARSHIP WHEN YOU CAN ENSLAVE ONE? ESPECIALLY ONE THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SUSTAIN YOURSELF BY CONSUMING ITS LIVING FLESH.
"IN THAT FIRST TERRIBLE HUNT, FATE DEALT THE ACANTI A VICIOUS HAND. AMONG THOSE STRICKEN BY THE SLAVER VIRUS WAS THE PROPHET-SINGER -- LEADER OF THE ACANTI, CARETAKER OF THE SOUL OF THE ENTIRE RACE.
"SO LONG AS HE LIVED, THE ACANTI COULD NOT, DID NOT, DESERT HIM. BUT EVEN HIS EVENTUAL DEATH DID NOT END THEIR TORMENT.
"NORMALLY, WHEN THEY DIE, ACANTI HURL THEMSELVES INTO THE HEART OF A STAR. IN THE CASE OF THE PROPHET-SINGER, THIS IS ESSENTIAL...
"... FOR UNLESS HIS BODY IS CONSUMED, THE ACANTI RACIAL SOUL -- CARRIED IN HIS CHARGE -- CANNOT BE RELEASED, TO BE PASSED ON TO HIS SUCCESSOR. AND WITHOUT THAT SOUL, THE ACANTI AS A RACE CANNOT SURVIVE. HOWEVER, WHEN THE PROPHET-SINGER DIED, THE BROOD GROUNDED HIM ON THIS SYSTEM'S THIRD WORLD -- AND TURNED HIS ROTTING CORPSE INTO THEIR THRONE CITY.


"THE SOUL REMAINS TRAPPED WITHIN THE CARCASS -- AND THE ACANTI REMAIN BOUND TO IT. DOOMED IF THEY LEAVE, DOOMED IF THEY REMAIN.
"THEN, AFTER AEONS IN BONDAGE, THE SURVIVORS -- THE PITIFULLY FEW ACANTI WHO HAD MANAGED TO ELUDE THE BROOD HUNTING CADRES -- WERE SWEPT BY A BURST OF HOPE. A PROPHET-SINGER, THE FIRST IN GENERATIONS, HAD BEEN CONCEIVED.
"BUT BEFORE THE BABY COULD COME TO TERM, HIS MOTHER WAS INFECTED WITH THE SLAVER VIRUS. RATHER THAN RISK HER SON'S INFECTION AND POSSIBLE ENSLAVEMENT...
"...SHE GAVE PREMATURE BIRTH.
"IT WAS SHE WHOM YOU FOUND ON MADRIZAR, CAROL, HER LIFE YOU BROUGHT TO A MERCIFUL END.
"BUT THE BABY HAD BEEN BORN TOO SOON. IT WAS TOO FRAGILE TO SURVIVE -- ITS MIND UNABLE YET TO COPE WITH THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT -- EVEN WITH THE AID OF ITS ADULT BRETHREN. THAT WAS WHEN THE ACANTI FOUND ME, FLOATING THROUGH SPACE, IN THE LAST MOMENTS OF MY OWN LIFE.
"THEY BONDED ME INTO A PHYSICAL AND PSYCHIC RAPPORT WITH THE INFANT. I PROVIDE THE AWARENESS, THE CONSCIOUS DIRECTION -- THE... WILL -- NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN HIM, UNTIL HIS OWN MIND DEVELOPS SUFFICIENTLY TO HANDLE THAT RESPONSIBILITY.
"IN RETURN, HIS BODY'S NATURAL HEALING ABILITIES RESTORE MY BODY TO HEALTH.

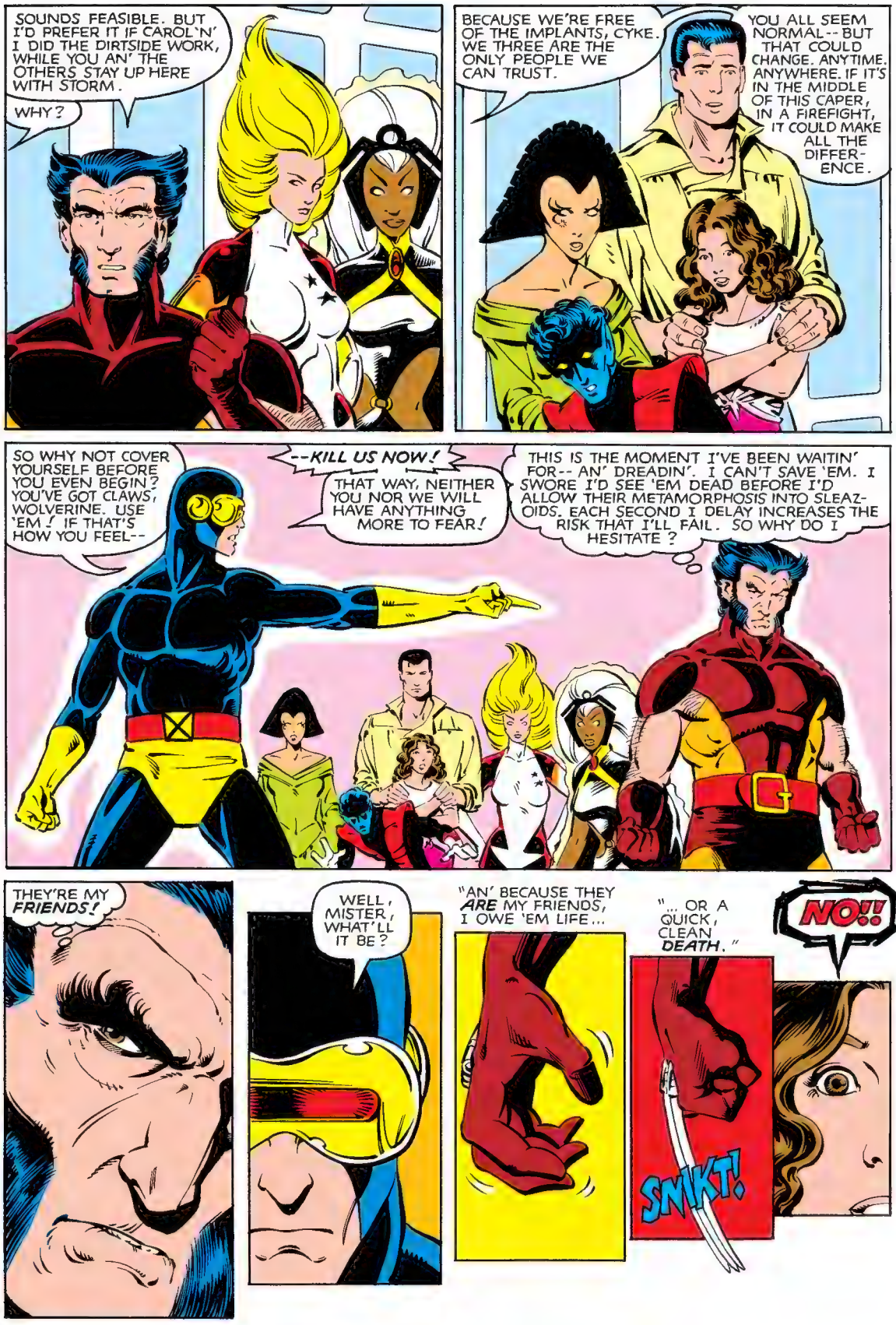
THUS IS A CRITICAL PERSONAL BALANCE RESTORED. AS "GODDESS" AND WOMAN, I AM CONSECRATED TO LIFE, SWORN TO PRESERVE IT. YET I DESTROYED THE QUEEN EMBRYO IMPLANTED WITHIN ME.
NOW, HOWEVER, I HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE AN EQUALLY HELPLESS LIFE. TO GIVE INSTEAD OF TAKE.

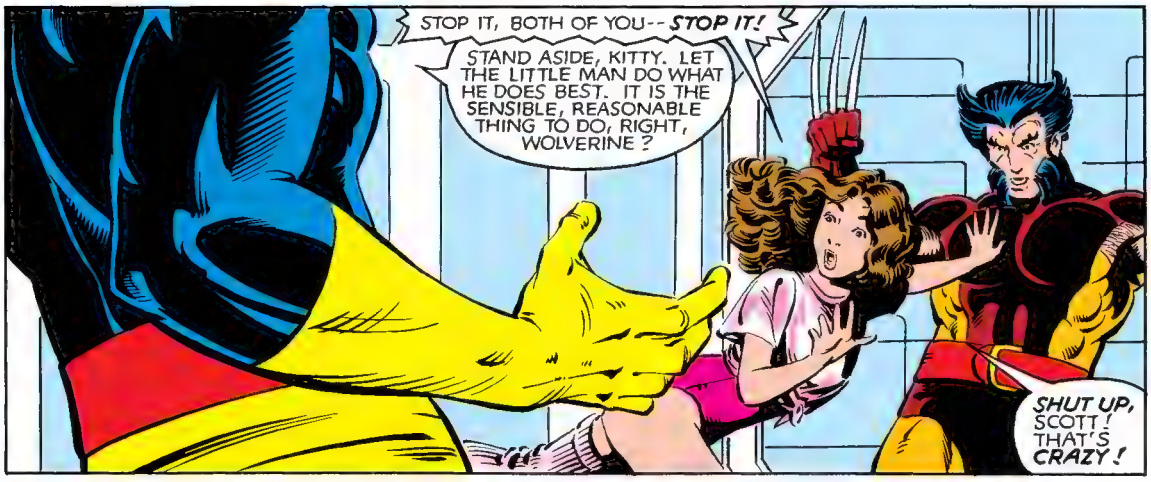

AND WHAT I DO FOR ONE, THE X-MEN MIGHT DO FOR AN ENTIRE RACE.
IF WE CAN RELEASE THE SOUL, SO THAT IT CAN BE PASSED ON TO THIS CHILD, HE CAN THEN LEAD THE ACANTI TO SAFETY.
WHERE DO WE FIND THIS SOUL, 'RORO?


IN THE HEAD OF THE SKELETON, AT ITS BASE.
FIGURES. I BEEN THERE, DARLIN'-- SOME VERY NASTY CRITTERS CLAIM THAT TURF, BEINGS EVEN THE BROOD ARE SCARED OF.
IN THAT CASE, LOGAN, WE OUGHT TO FIT RIGHT IN.

MY FRIENDS, I AM TIRED OF RUNNING, AND OF BEING A VICTIM. IF I AM TO DIE, I WOULD PREFER TO DO IT FIGHTING FOR SOMETHING, RATHER THAN AGAINST.
LET US SAVE THE ACANTI, IF WE CAN.
CAN WE, GUYS? PLEASE?

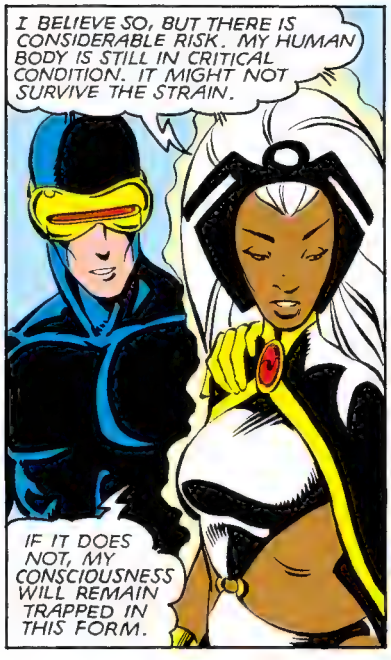
I THINK WE'RE AGREED ON THIS. BUT HOW TO BEST ACCOMPLISH THAT OBJECTIVE?
SUPPOSE STORM AND BINARY CREATE A DIVERSION, TO DRAW AS MUCH OF THE BROOD'S ATTENTION, AND THE BATTLE FLEET, AS POSSIBLE, AWAY FROM THE PLANET. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE REST OF US BEAM DOWN TO THE SKELETON TO MAKE A RUN FOR THE SOUL.
IF WE KEEP LILANDRA'S YACHT HERE INSIDE THE BABY, THE SHIP'S SHIELDS MASKING IT FROM BROOD SENSORS, THEY'LL HAVE NO IDEA THE X-MEN ARE INVOLVED. WE COULD FINISH THE JOB BEFORE THEY'RE EVEN AWARE OF US.

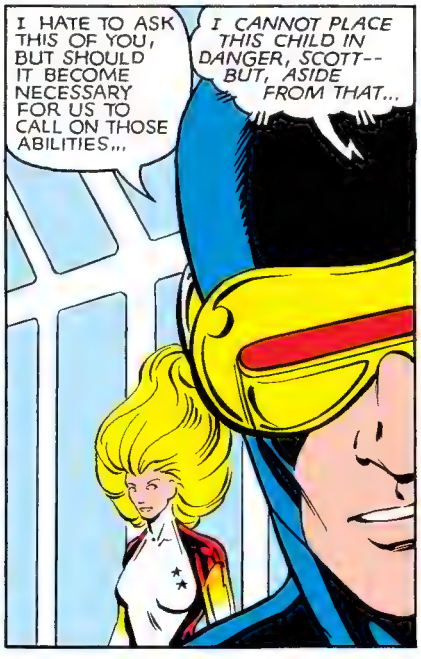

SOUNDS FEASIBLE. BUT I'D PREFER IT IF CAROL'N' I DID THE DIRTSIDE WORK, WHILE YOU AN' THE OTHERS STAY UP HERE WITH STORM.
WHY?
BECAUSE WE'RE FREE OF THE IMPLANTS, CYKE. WE THREE ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE WE CAN TRUST.
YOU ALL SEEM NORMAL-- BUT THAT COULD CHANGE. ANYTIME. ANYWHERE. IF IT'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS CAPER, IN A FIREFIGHT, IT COULD MAKE ALL THE DIFFER-ENCE.
SO WHY NOT COVER YOURSELF BEFORE YOU EVEN BEGIN? YOU'VE GOT CLAWS, WOLVERINE. USE 'EM! IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL--
--KILL US NOW!
THAT WAY, NEITHER YOU NOR WE WILL HAVE ANYTHING MORE TO FEAR!
THIS IS THE MOMENT I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR-- AN' DREADIN'. I CAN'T SAVE 'EM. I SWORE I'D SEE 'EM DEAD BEFORE I'D ALLOW THEIR METAMORPHOSIS INTO SLEAZ-OIDS. EACH SECOND I DELAY INCREASES THE RISK THAT I'LL FAIL. SO WHY DO I HESITATE?
THEY'RE MY FRIENDS!
WELL, MISTER, WHAT'LL IT BE?
"AN' BECAUSE THEY ARE MY FRIENDS, I OWE 'EM LIFE...
"... OR A QUICK, CLEAN DEATH."
SNIKT!
NO!!


STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU-- STOP IT!
STAND ASIDE, KITTY. LET THE LITTLE MAN DO WHAT HE DOES BEST. IT IS THE SENSIBLE, REASONABLE THING TO DO, RIGHT, WOLVERINE?
SHUT UP, SCOTT! THAT'S CRAZY!

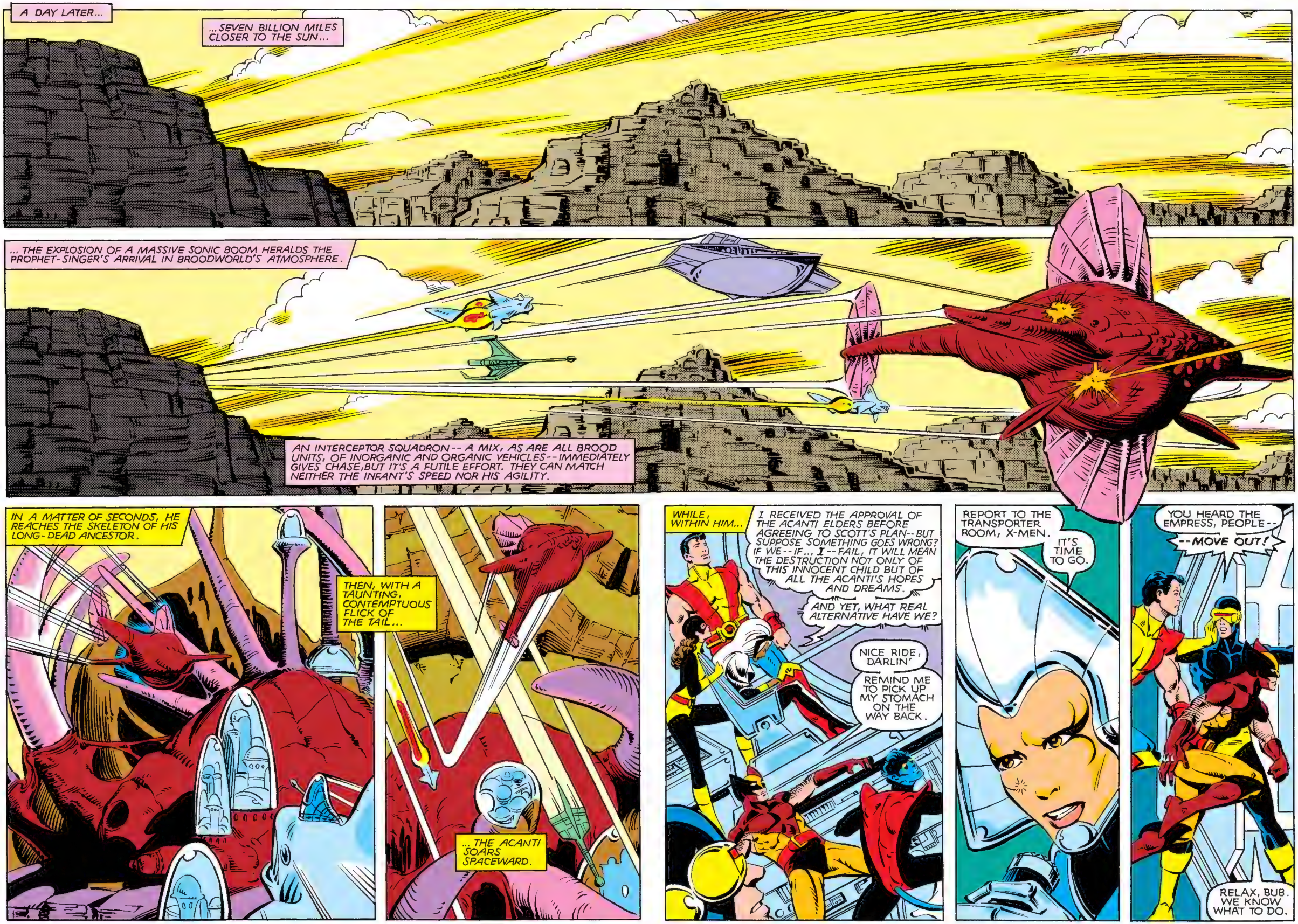
LOGAN, I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE ME. I'VE NEVER BEEN SO SCARED. BUT I'M NOT GONNA GIVE UP. MAYBE THIS IS A HOPELESS FIGHT, BUT I WON'T QUIT.
AND PART OF NOT QUITTING MEANS STANDING BESIDE MY FELLOW X-MEN, ALL OF US, TOGETHER TO THE END-- AS A TEAM, LOGAN! A FAMILY!
IF WE MEAN ANYTHING TO EACH OTHER-- IF BEING AN X-MAN MEANS ANYTHING-- THIS IS WHERE AND HOW WE PROVE IT!
I'M NOT ARGUIN', KID--THIS WAS CYKE'S CHALLENGE.

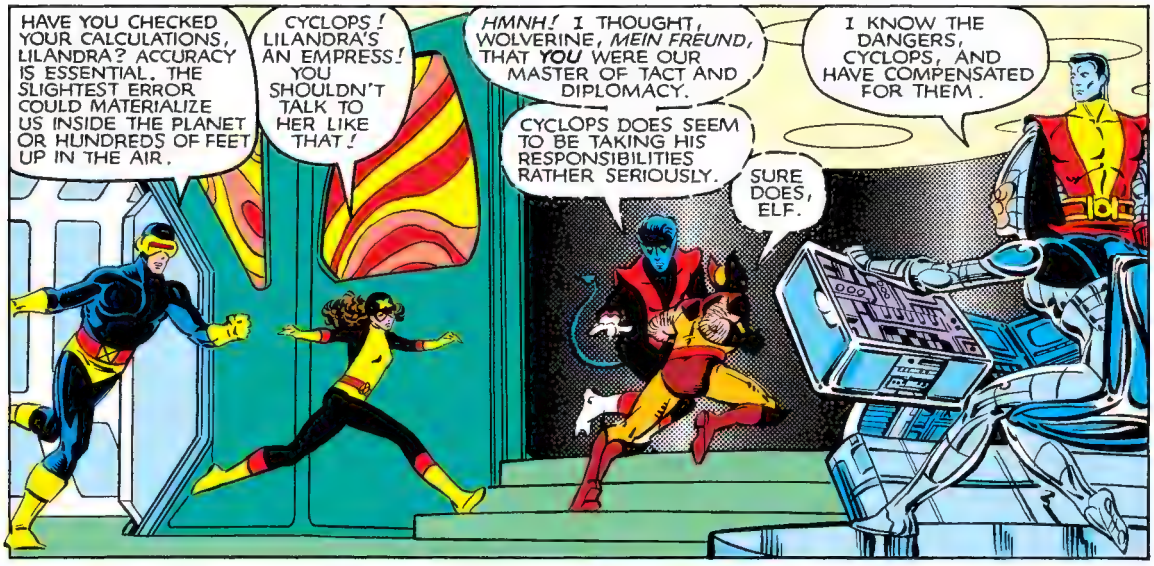
OBJECTION NOTED-- AND OVERRULED, WOLVERINE. WE'LL USE MY PLAN.
MY APOLOGIES, ORORO, FOR USURPING YOUR ROLE AS TEAM LEADER.
YOU WERE MY PREDECESSOR, SCOTT, AND, AT THE MOMENT, I AM IN NO POSITION TO LEAD.
TELL ME, CAN YOU UTILIZE YOUR WEATHER POWERS IN THIS ACANTI FORM?


I BELIEVE SO, BUT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE RISK. MY HUMAN BODY IS STILL IN CRITICAL CONDITION. IT MIGHT NOT SURVIVE THE STRAIN.
IF IT DOES NOT, MY CONSCIOUSNESS WILL REMAIN TRAPPED IN THIS FORM.

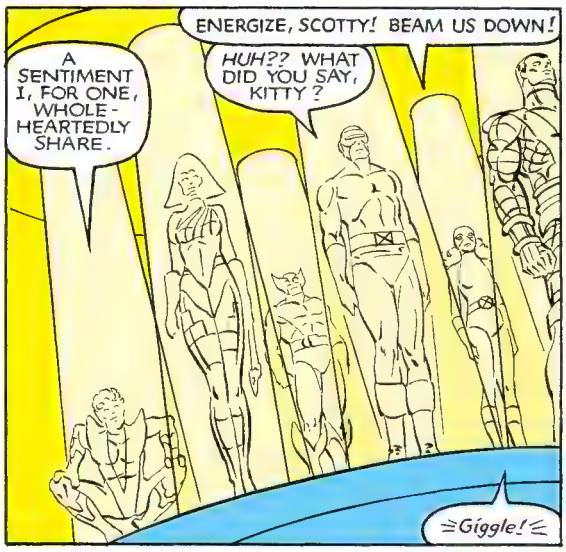

I HATE TO ASK THIS OF YOU, BUT SHOULD IT BECOME NECESSARY FOR US TO CALL ON THOSE ABILITIES...
I CANNOT PLACE THIS CHILD IN DANGER, SCOTT-- BUT, ASIDE FROM THAT...

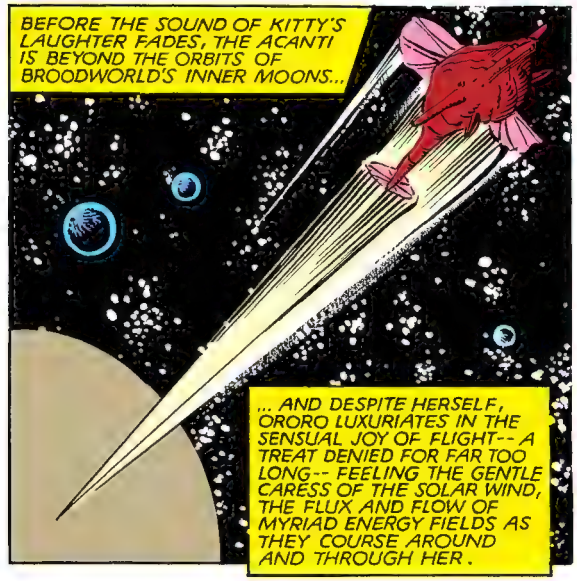
...I WILL DO WHAT MUST BE DONE...
...WHATEVER THE COST.

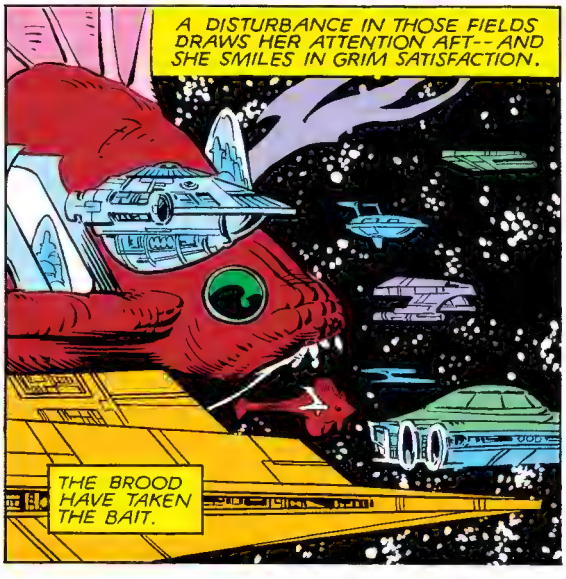

A DAY LATER...
...SEVEN BILLION MILES CLOSER TO THE SUN...
... THE EXPLOSION OF A MASSIVE SONIC BOOM HERALDS THE PROPHET-SINGER'S ARRIVAL IN BROODWORLD'S ATMOSPHERE.
AN INTERCEPTOR SQUADRON--A MIX, AS ARE ALL BROOD UNITS, OF INORGANIC AND ORGANIC VEHICLES--IMMEDIATELY GIVES CHASE; BUT IT'S A FUTILE EFFORT. THEY CAN MATCH NEITHER THE INFANT'S SPEED NOR HIS AGILITY.
IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, HE REACHES THE SKELETON OF HIS LONG-DEAD ANCESTOR.
THEN, WITH A TAUNTING, CONTEMPTUOUS FLICK OF THE TAIL...
... THE ACANTI SOARS SPACEWARD.
WHILE, WITHIN HIM...
I RECEIVED THE APPROVAL OF THE ACANTI ELDERS BEFORE AGREEING TO SCOTT'S PLAN--BUT SUPPOSE SOMETHING GOES WRONG? IF WE--IF... I--FAIL, IT WILL MEAN THE DESTRUCTION NOT ONLY OF THIS INNOCENT CHILD BUT OF ALL THE ACANTI'S HOPES AND DREAMS.
AND YET, WHAT REAL ALTERNATIVE HAVE WE?
NICE RIDE, DARLIN'
REMIND ME TO PICK UP MY STOMACH ON THE WAY BACK.
REPORT TO THE TRANSPORTER ROOM, X-MEN.
IT'S TIME TO GO.
YOU HEARD THE EMPRESS, PEOPLE--
--MOVE OUT!
RELAX, BUB. WE KNOW WHAT TO DO.

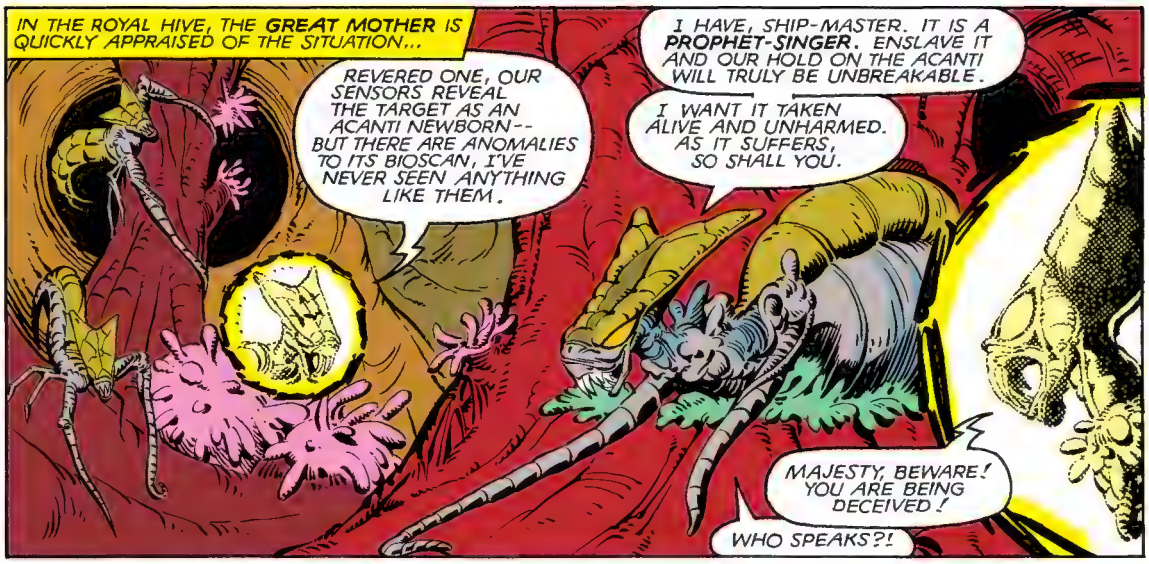

HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR CALCULATIONS, LILANDRA? ACCURACY IS ESSENTIAL. THE SLIGHTEST ERROR COULD MATERIALIZE US INSIDE THE PLANET OR HUNDREDS OF FEET UP IN THE AIR.
CYCLOPS! LILANDRA'S AN EMPRESS! YOU SHOULDN'T TALK TO HER LIKE THAT!
HMNH! I THOUGHT, WOLVERINE, MEIN FREUND, THAT YOU WERE OUR MASTER OF TACT AND DIPLOMACY.
CYCLOPS DOES SEEM TO BE TAKING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES RATHER SERIOUSLY.
SURE DOES, ELF.
I KNOW THE DANGERS, CYCLOPS, AND HAVE COMPENSATED FOR THEM.

IF YOU ARE AFRAID, STAY ABOARD.
I'M A CAREFUL MAN, MAJESTRIX.
I DON'T WANT ANY OF US HURT.

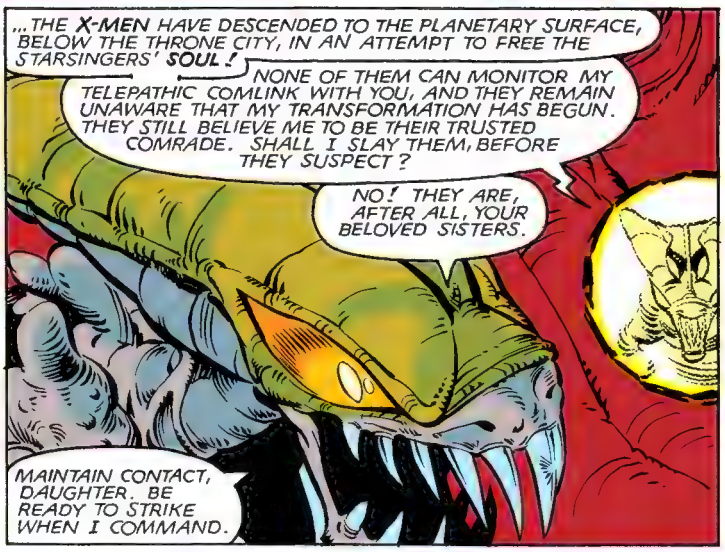

ENERGIZE, SCOTTY! BEAM US DOWN!
A SENTIMENT I, FOR ONE, WHOLE-HEARTEDLY SHARE.
HUH?? WHAT DID YOU SAY, KITTY?
≡Giggle!≡

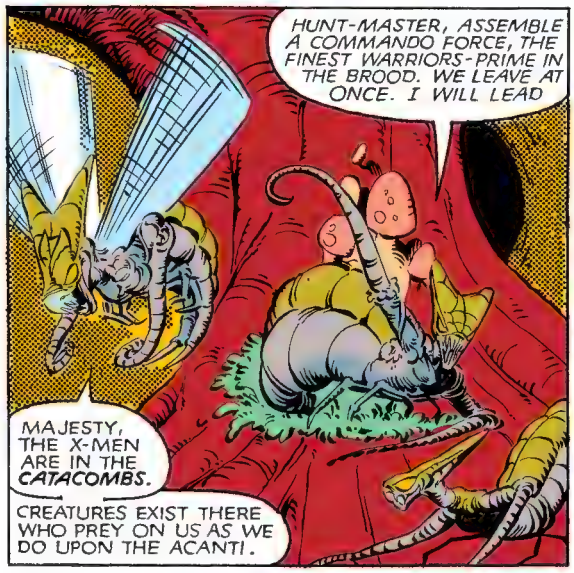

BEFORE THE SOUND OF KITTY'S LAUGHTER FADES, THE ACANTI IS BEYOND THE ORBITS OF BROODWORLD'S INNER MOONS...
... AND DESPITE HERSELF, ORORO LUXURIATES IN THE SENSUAL JOY OF FLIGHT-- A TREAT DENIED FOR FAR TOO LONG-- FEELING THE GENTLE CARESS OF THE SOLAR WIND, THE FLUX AND FLOW OF MYRIAD ENERGY FIELDS AS THEY COURSE AROUND AND THROUGH HER.

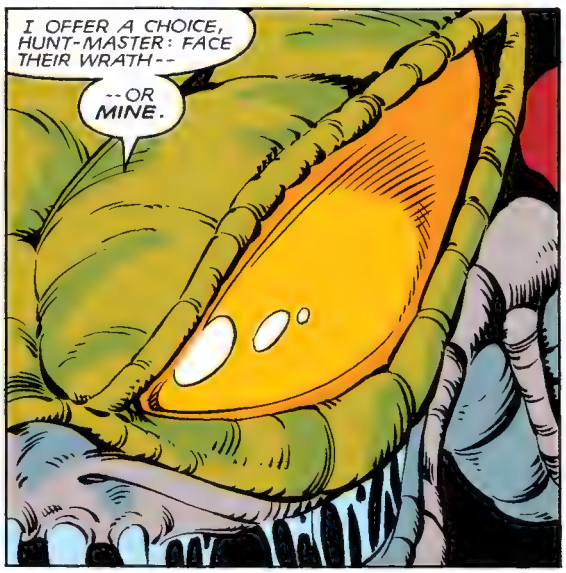

A DISTURBANCE IN THOSE FIELDS DRAWS HER ATTENTION AFT-- AND SHE SMILES IN GRIM SATISFACTION.
THE BROOD HAVE TAKEN THE BAIT.

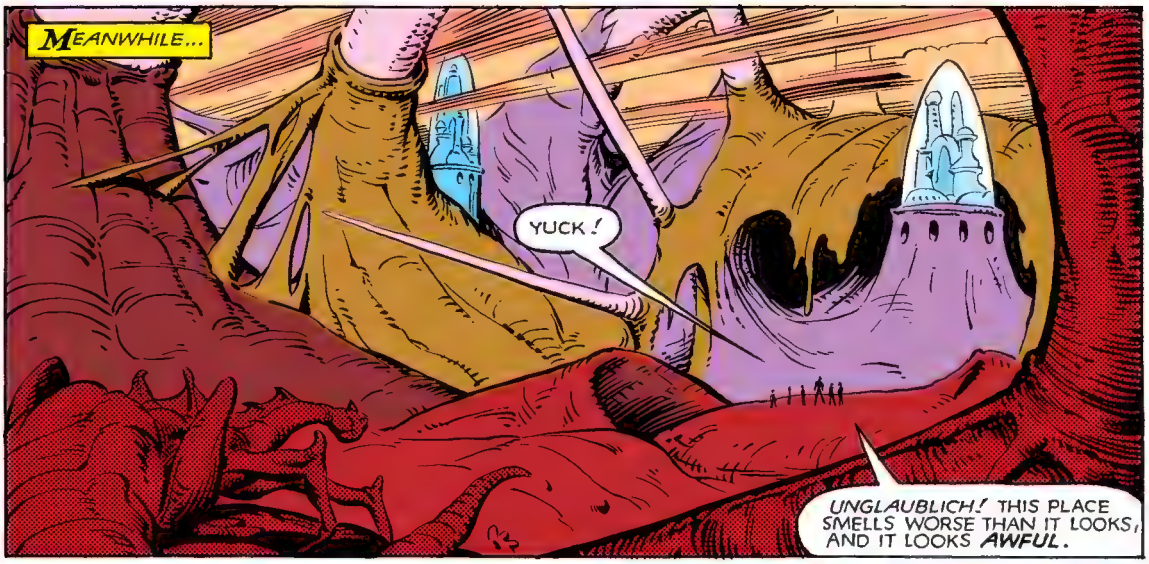

IN THE ROYAL HIVE, THE GREAT MOTHER IS QUICKLY APPRAISED OF THE SITUATION...
REVERED ONE, OUR SENSORS REVEAL THE TARGET AS AN ACANTI NEWBORN-- BUT THERE ARE ANOMALIES TO ITS BIOSCAN, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THEM.
I HAVE, SHIP-MASTER. IT IS A PROPHET-SINGER. ENSLAVE IT AND OUR HOLD ON THE ACANTI WILL TRULY BE UNBREAKABLE.
I WANT IT TAKEN ALIVE AND UNHARMED. AS IT SUFFERS, SO SHALL YOU.
MAJESTY, BEWARE! YOU ARE BEING DECEIVED!
WHO SPEAKS?!

DO YOU NOT RECOGNIZE ONE OF YOUR OWN PROGENY?
WHILE YOUR FLEET CHASES THE ACANTI WHELP...


...THE X-MEN HAVE DESCENDED TO THE PLANETARY SURFACE, BELOW THE THRONE CITY, IN AN ATTEMPT TO FREE THE STARSINGERS' SOUL!
NONE OF THEM CAN MONITOR MY TELEPATHIC COMLINK WITH YOU, AND THEY REMAIN UNAWARE THAT MY TRANSFORMATION HAS BEGUN. THEY STILL BELIEVE ME TO BE THEIR TRUSTED COMRADE. SHALL I SLAY THEM, BEFORE THEY SUSPECT?
NO! THEY ARE, AFTER ALL, YOUR BELOVED SISTERS.
MAINTAIN CONTACT, DAUGHTER. BE READY TO STRIKE WHEN I COMMAND.

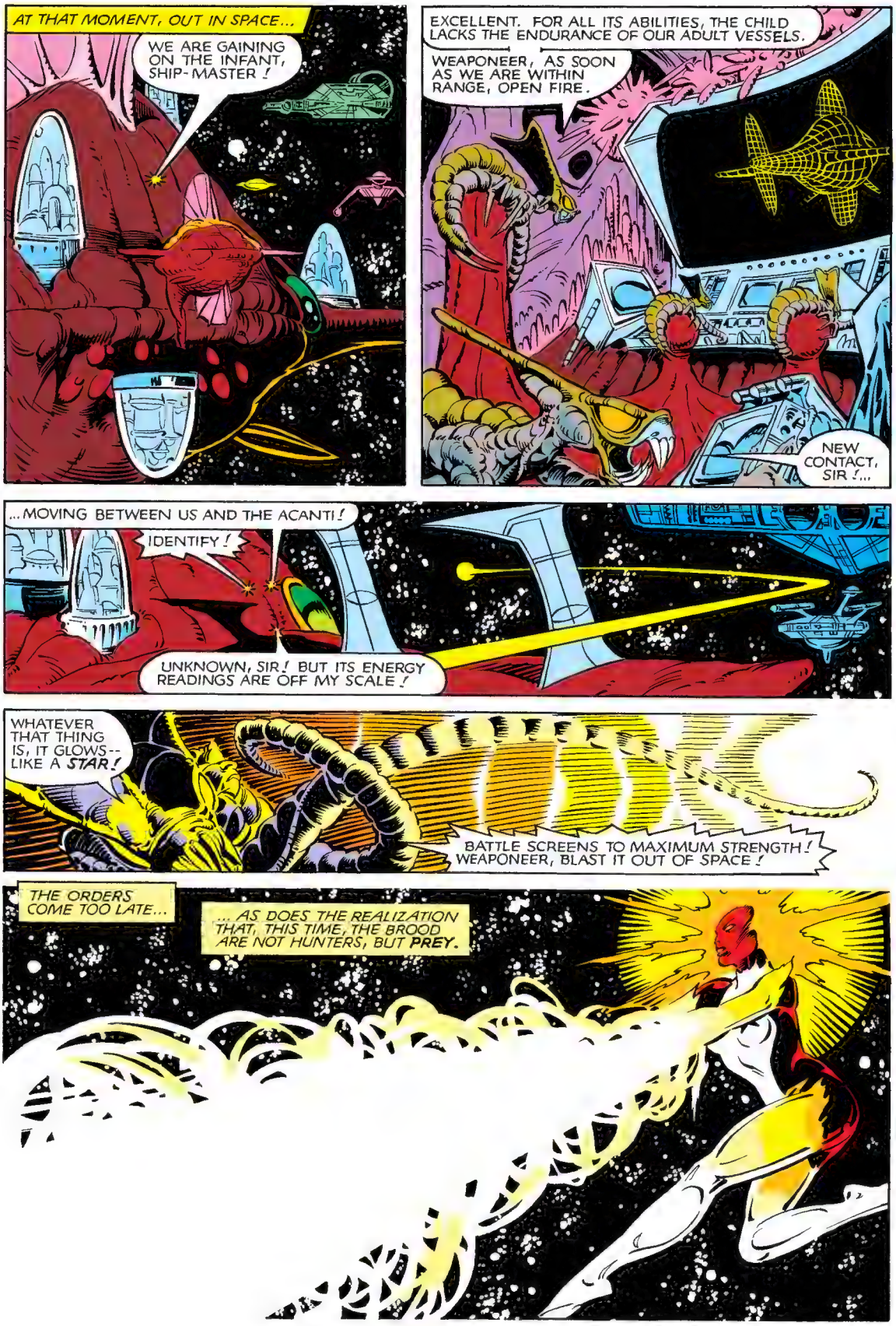

HUNT-MASTER, ASSEMBLE A COMMANDO FORCE, THE FINEST WARRIORS-PRIME IN THE BROOD. WE LEAVE AT ONCE. I WILL LEAD
MAJESTY, THE X-MEN ARE IN THE CATACOMBS.
CREATURES EXIST THERE WHO PREY ON US AS WE DO UPON THE ACANTI.

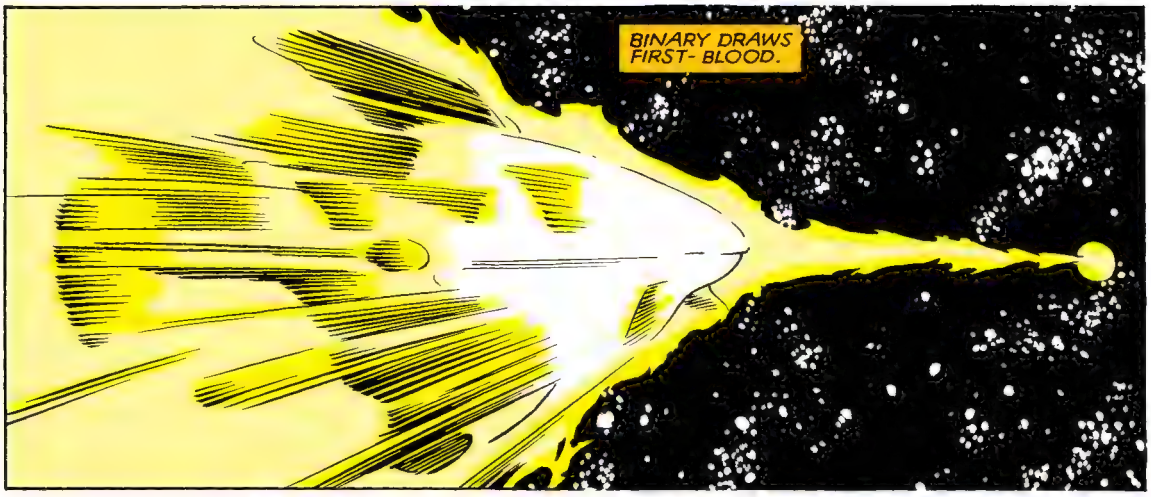

I OFFER A CHOICE, HUNT-MASTER: FACE THEIR WRATH--
--OR MINE.


MEANWHILE...
YUCK!
UNGLAUBLICH! THIS PLACE SMELLS WORSE THAN IT LOOKS, AND IT LOOKS AWFUL.

I WANT TO GO HOME.
SMART KID.
COLD FEET, WOLVERINE? I DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING COULD SPOOK YOU.
YOU WANT TO MAKE SMART REMARKS, BUB, WAIT'LL WE'VE MET THE OPPOSITION.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

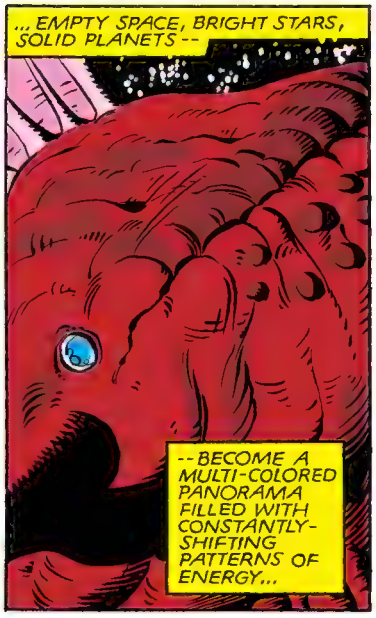
DOWN.
STORM TELEPATHICALLY KEYED ME INTO THE SOUL'S "SCENT." MY ENHANCED SENSES ARE ALREADY LOCKING IN ON IT.
STAY CLOSE AN' STAY READY. THE PLANTS ARE JUST AS DANGEROUS AS THE ANIMALS, AN' THE TWILIGHT DARKNESS O' THESE TUNNELS WORKS IN THEIR FAVOR.
I WONDER HOW ORORO'S DOING?
I HOPE SHE AND BINARY ARE OKAY.
THEY CAN TAKE CARE O' THEMSELVES, PUN'KIN. YOU MAKE SURE YOU DO THE SAME.

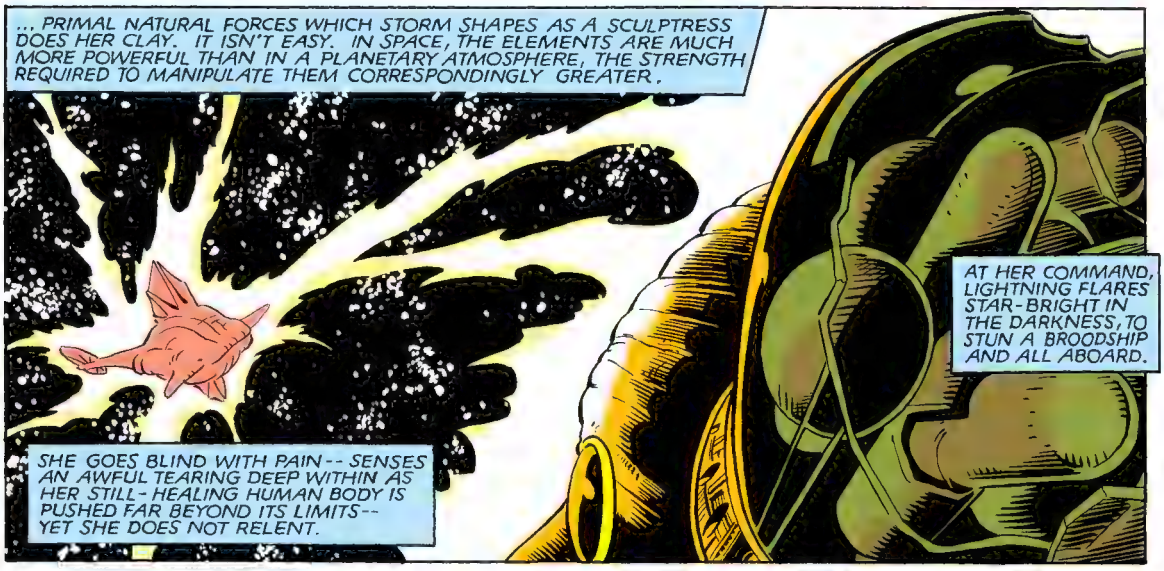

AT THAT MOMENT, OUT IN SPACE...
WE ARE GAINING ON THE INFANT, SHIP-MASTER !
EXCELLENT. FOR ALL ITS ABILITIES, THE CHILD LACKS THE ENDURANCE OF OUR ADULT VESSELS.
WEAPONEER, AS SOON AS WE ARE WITHIN RANGE, OPEN FIRE.
NEW CONTACT, SIR !...
...MOVING BETWEEN US AND THE ACANTI!
IDENTIFY !
UNKNOWN, SIR! BUT ITS ENERGY READINGS ARE OFF MY SCALE !
WHATEVER THAT THING IS, IT GLOWS-- LIKE A STAR!
BATTLE SCREENS TO MAXIMUM STRENGTH! WEAPONEER, BLAST IT OUT OF SPACE !
THE ORDERS COME TOO LATE...
... AS DOES THE REALIZATION THAT, THIS TIME, THE BROOD ARE NOT HUNTERS, BUT PREY.

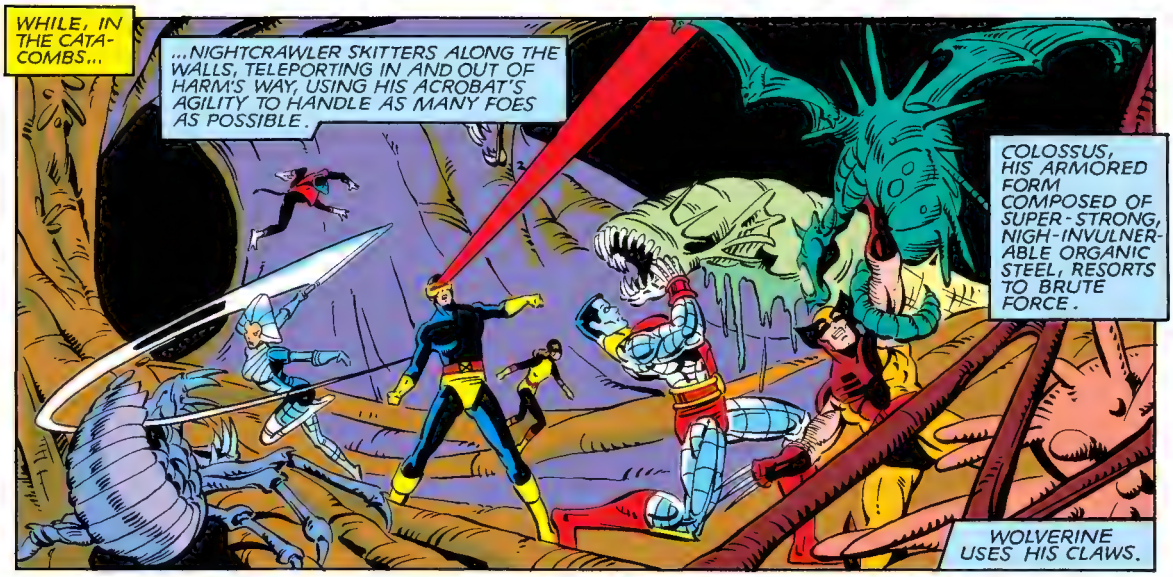

BINARY DRAWS FIRST- BLOOD.

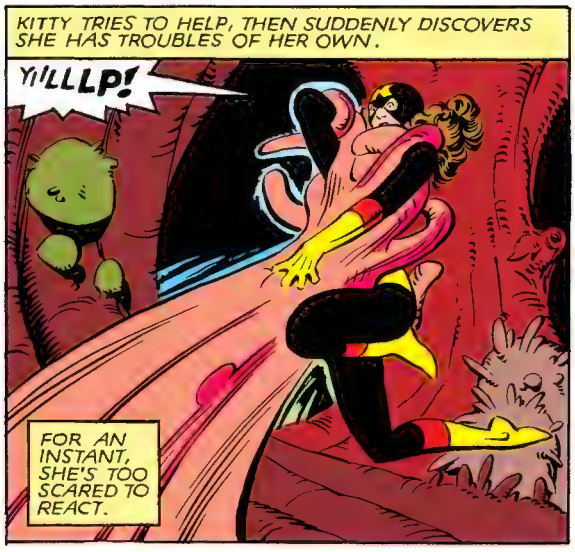
CAROL WAS TRAINED AS A WARRIOR-- AS WERE WOLVERINE AND LILANDRA.
KILLING IS A FACT OF THEIR LIVES, A NECESSARY REALITY.
TO ME, THOUGH, IT IS ANATHEMA.

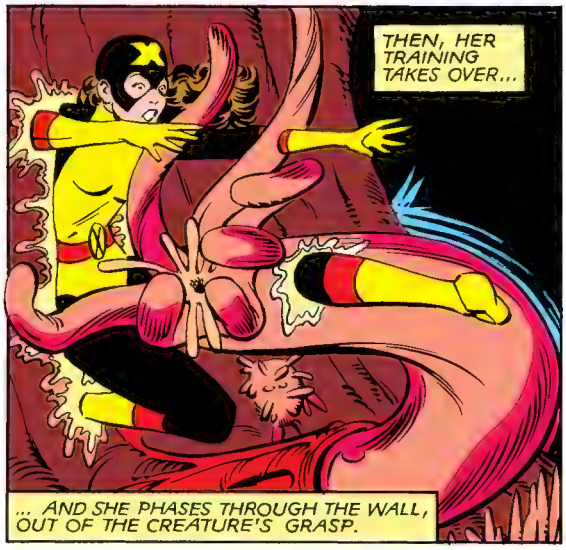
I HATE THE BROOD WITH EVERY FIBRE OF MY BEING...
... YET STILL I MUST FIND ANOTHER WAY.
ORORO'S PERCEPTIONS SUBTLY ALTER THE UNIVERSE WE SEE...

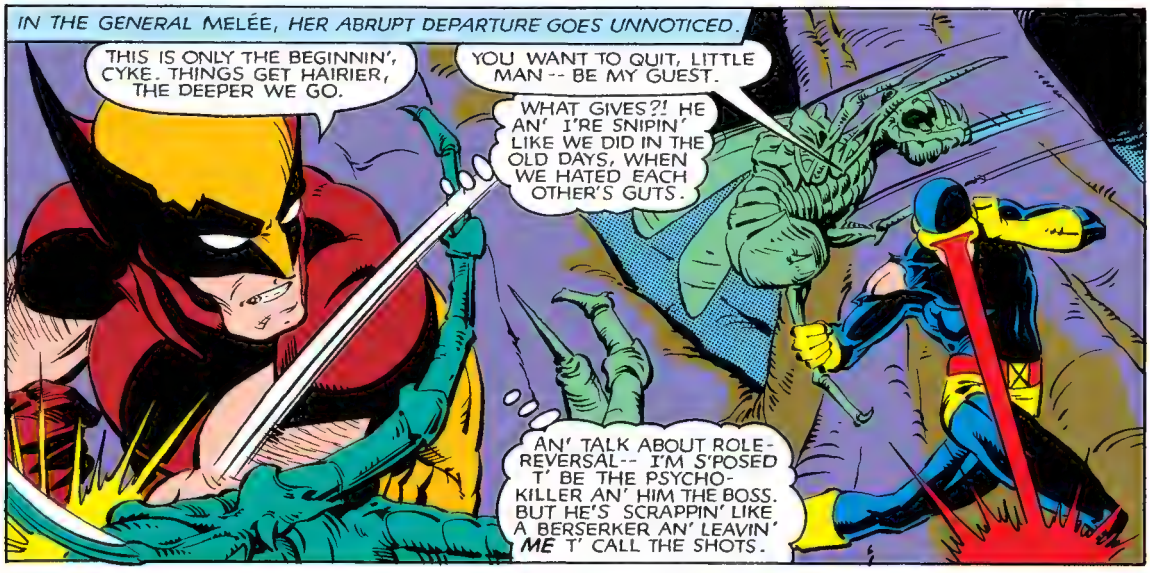

... EMPTY SPACE, BRIGHT STARS, SOLID PLANETS--
--BECOME A MULTI-COLORED PANORAMA FILLED WITH CONSTANTLY-SHIFTING PATTERNS OF ENERGY...


... PRIMAL NATURAL FORCES WHICH STORM SHAPES AS A SCULPTRESS DOES HER CLAY. IT ISN'T EASY. IN SPACE, THE ELEMENTS ARE MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN IN A PLANETARY ATMOSPHERE, THE STRENGTH REQUIRED TO MANIPULATE THEM CORRESPONDINGLY GREATER.
AT HER COMMAND, LIGHTNING FLARES STAR-BRIGHT IN THE DARKNESS, TO STUN A BROODSHIP AND ALL ABOARD.
SHE GOES BLIND WITH PAIN-- SENSES AN AWFUL TEARING DEEP WITHIN AS HER STILL-HEALING HUMAN BODY IS PUSHED FAR BEYOND ITS LIMITS-- YET SHE DOES NOT RELENT.


WHILE, IN THE CATA-COMBS...
...NIGHTCRAWLER SKITTERS ALONG THE WALLS, TELEPORTING IN AND OUT OF HARM'S WAY, USING HIS ACROBAT'S AGILITY TO HANDLE AS MANY FOES AS POSSIBLE.
COLOSSUS, HIS ARMORED FORM COMPOSED OF SUPER-STRONG, NIGH-INVULNER-ABLE ORGANIC STEEL, RESORTS TO BRUTE FORCE.
WOLVERINE USES HIS CLAWS.

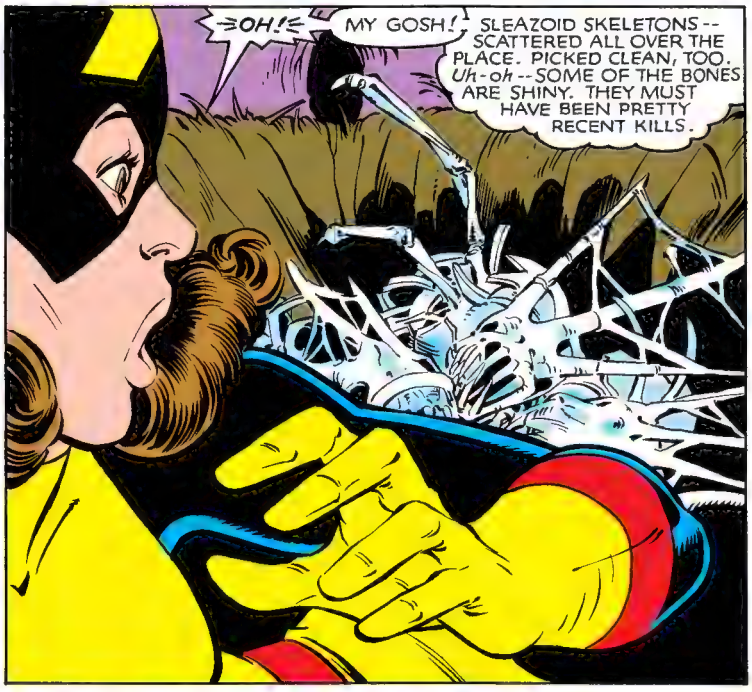

KITTY TRIES TO HELP, THEN SUDDENLY DISCOVERS SHE HAS TROUBLES OF HER OWN.
YI'LLLP!
FOR AN INSTANT, SHE'S TOO SCARED TO REACT.


THEN, HER TRAINING TAKES OVER...
... AND SHE PHASES THROUGH THE WALL, OUT OF THE CREATURE'S GRASP.


IN THE GENERAL MELÉE, HER ABRUPT DEPARTURE GOES UNNOTICED.
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNIN', CYKE. THINGS GET HAIRIER, THE DEEPER WE GO.
YOU WANT TO QUIT, LITTLE MAN -- BE MY GUEST.
WHAT GIVES?! HE AN' I'RE SNIPIN' LIKE WE DID IN THE OLD DAYS, WHEN WE HATED EACH OTHER'S GUTS.
AN' TALK ABOUT ROLE-REVERSAL-- I'M S'POSED T' BE THE PSYCHO-KILLER AN' HIM THE BOSS. BUT HE'S SCRAPPIN' LIKE A BERSERKER AN' LEAVIN' ME T' CALL THE SHOTS.

ELSEWHERE ...
OWW!
NEXT TIME, I REALLY MUST WATCH WHERE I'M PHASING.
I SLIPPED NOT ONLY THROUGH THAT CREEPY-CRAWLY-- UGH!--BUT THROUGH THE WALL IT WAS BASHING ME AGAINST. I MAY FLY THROUGH THE AIR WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE --

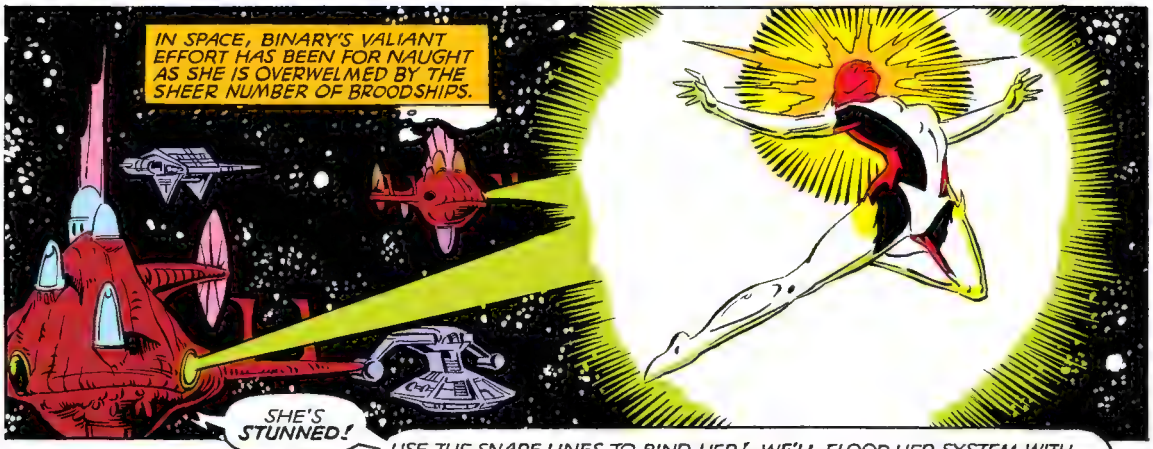
-- BUT MY LANDINGS LEAVE A BIT TO BE DESIRED.
WHERE AM I?
NOW THAT'S AN ORIGINAL LINE.

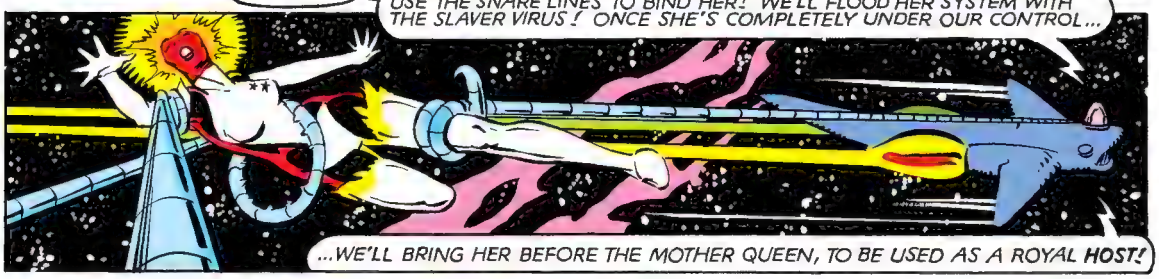

OH!
MY GOSH!
SLEAZOID SKELETONS -- SCATTERED ALL OVER THE PLACE. PICKED CLEAN, TOO. Uh-oh -- SOME OF THE BONES ARE SHINY. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY RECENT KILLS.

THIS IS A NEST. WITH EGGS IN IT. AND ONE OF 'EM'S CRACKED OPEN.
GREAT.
THOSE SLEAZOIDS LOOK RIPPED TO SHREDS. IF WHATEVER LIVES HERE CAN DO THAT TO THEM, I SHUDDER TO THINK OF WHAT IT COULD DO TO ME.

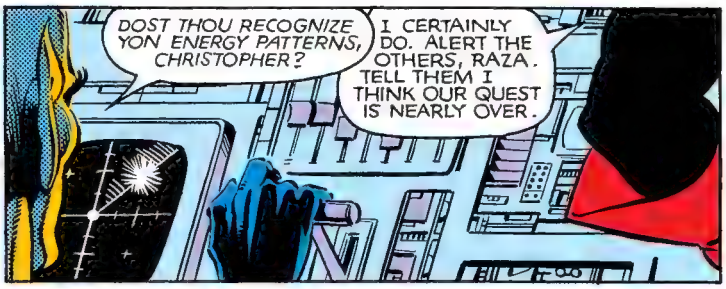
SO WHY STICK AROUND TO FIND OUT?
USING HER PHASING POWER TO LITERALLY WALK ON AIR, KITTY HEADS FOR THE NEAREST EXIT...

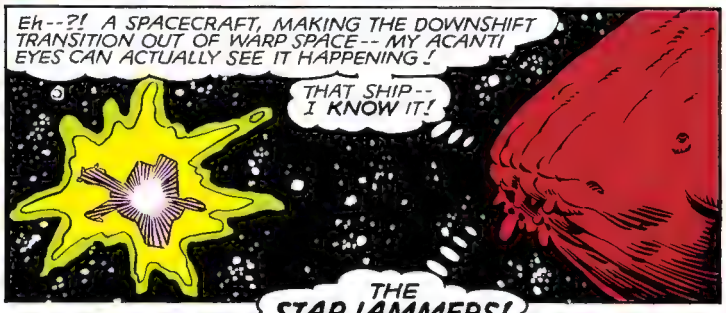
...BLISSFULLY UNAWARE THAT SHE'S BEING WATCHED...
... AND FOLLOWED.

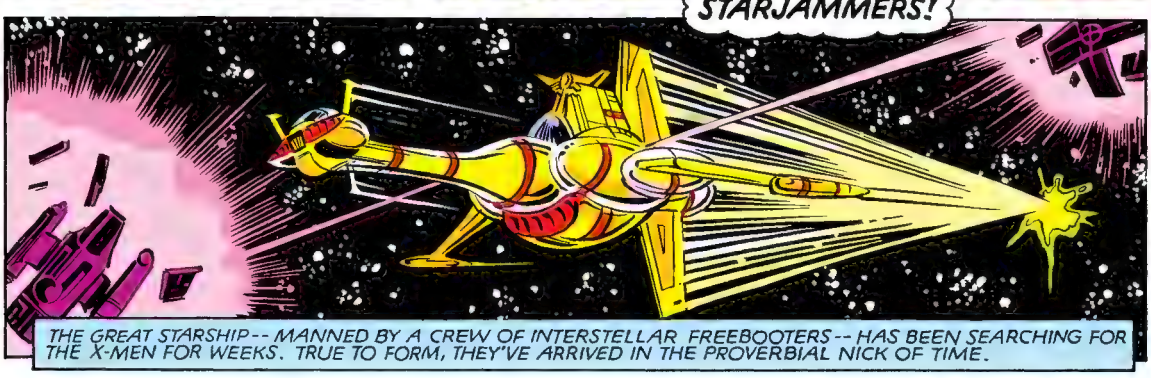

IN SPACE, BINARY'S VALIANT EFFORT HAS BEEN FOR NAUGHT AS SHE IS OVERWELMED BY THE SHEER NUMBER OF BROODSHIPS.

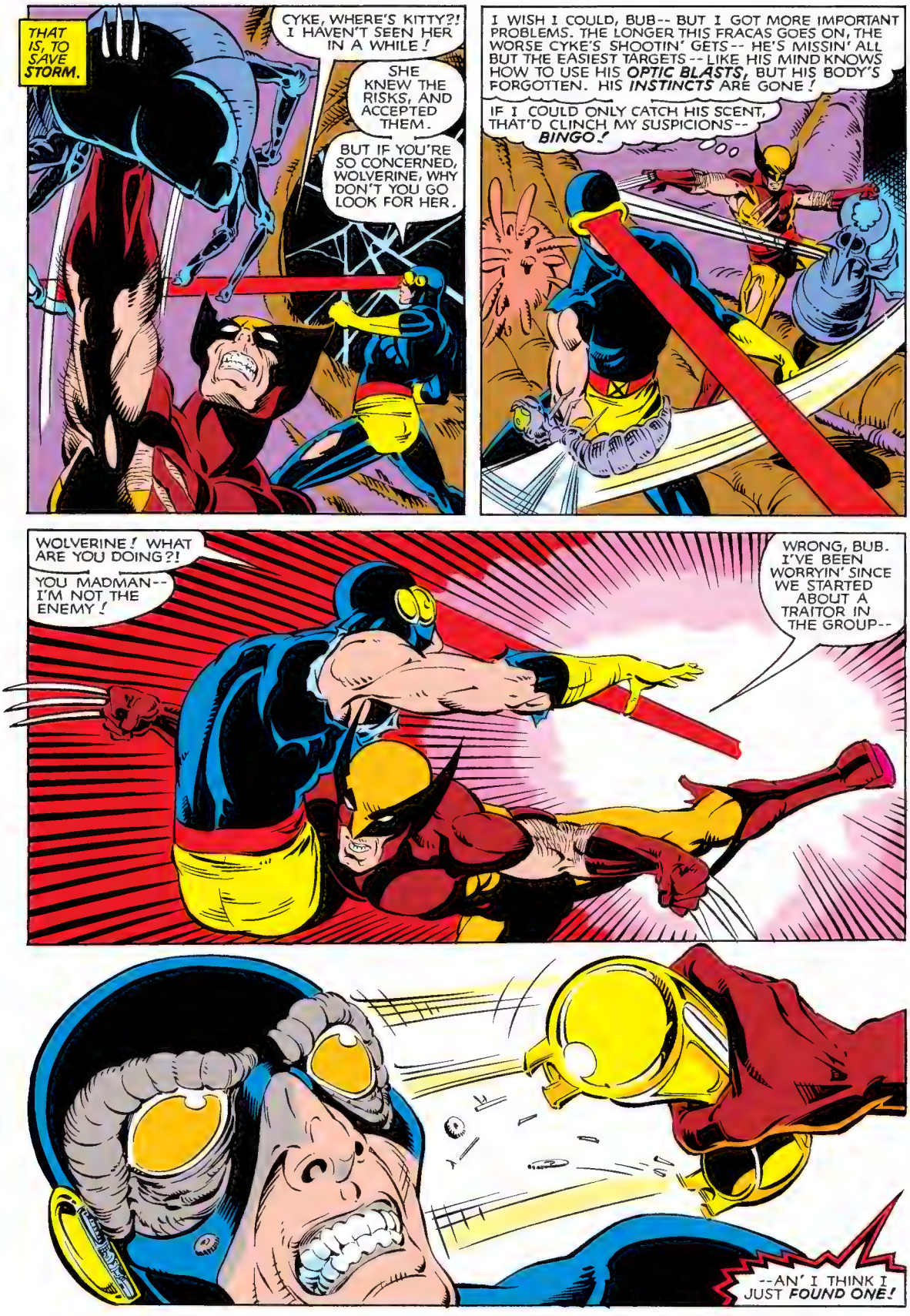

SHE'S STUNNED!
USE THE SNARE LINES TO BIND HER! WE'LL FLOOD HER SYSTEM WITH THE SLAVER VIRUS! ONCE SHE'S COMPLETELY UNDER OUR CONTROL...
...WE'LL BRING HER BEFORE THE MOTHER QUEEN, TO BE USED AS A ROYAL HOST!

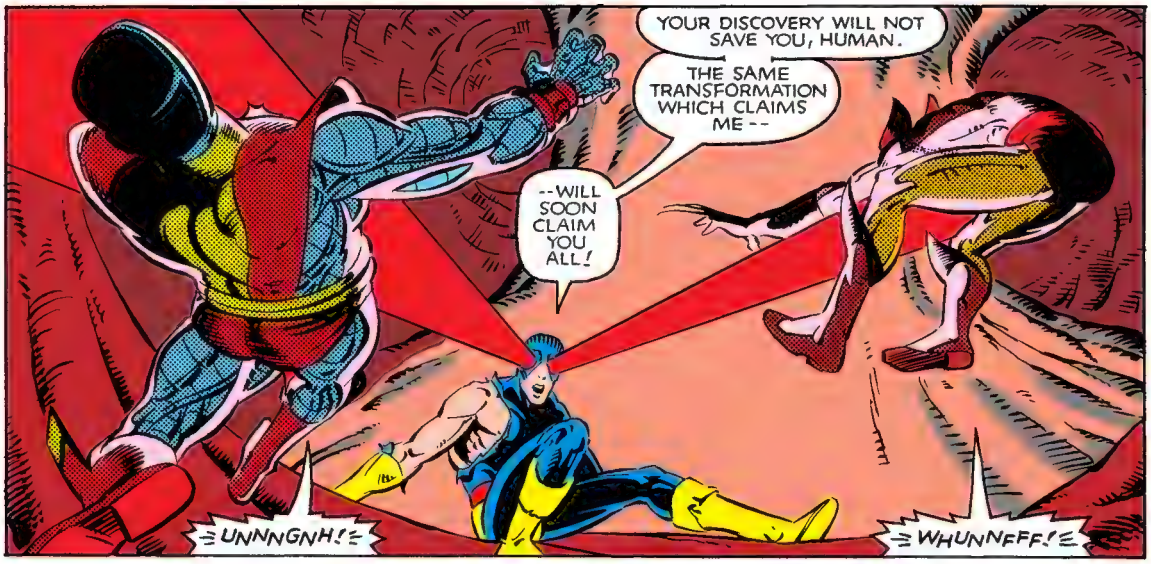
WITH CAROL NEUTRALIZED, THE BROOD'S CONCENTRATING THEIR FIRE ON ME--AAIIII!
I'M HIT!
A... MINOR WOUND--BUT I CANNOT AFFORD ANOTHER. IF THIS CHILD IS TO SURVIVE, I... I MUST FLEE.

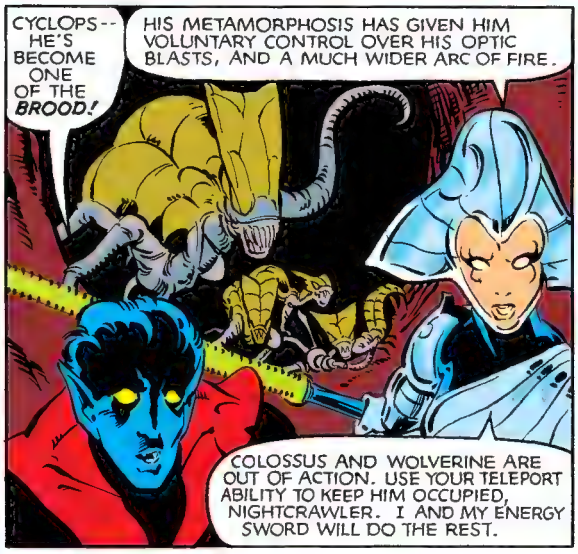

DOST THOU RECOGNIZE YON ENERGY PATTERNS, CHRISTOPHER?
I CERTAINLY DO. ALERT THE OTHERS, RAZA. TELL THEM I THINK OUR QUEST IS NEARLY OVER.

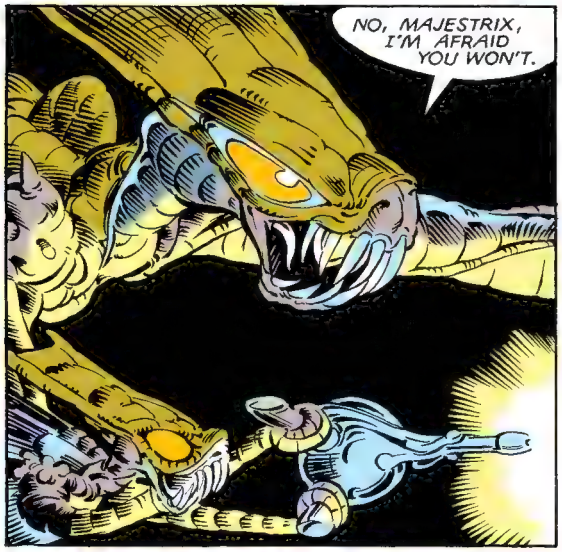

Eh--?! A SPACECRAFT, MAKING THE DOWNSHIFT TRANSITION OUT OF WARP SPACE-- MY ACANTI EYES CAN ACTUALLY SEE IT HAPPENING!
THAT SHIP--I KNOW IT!

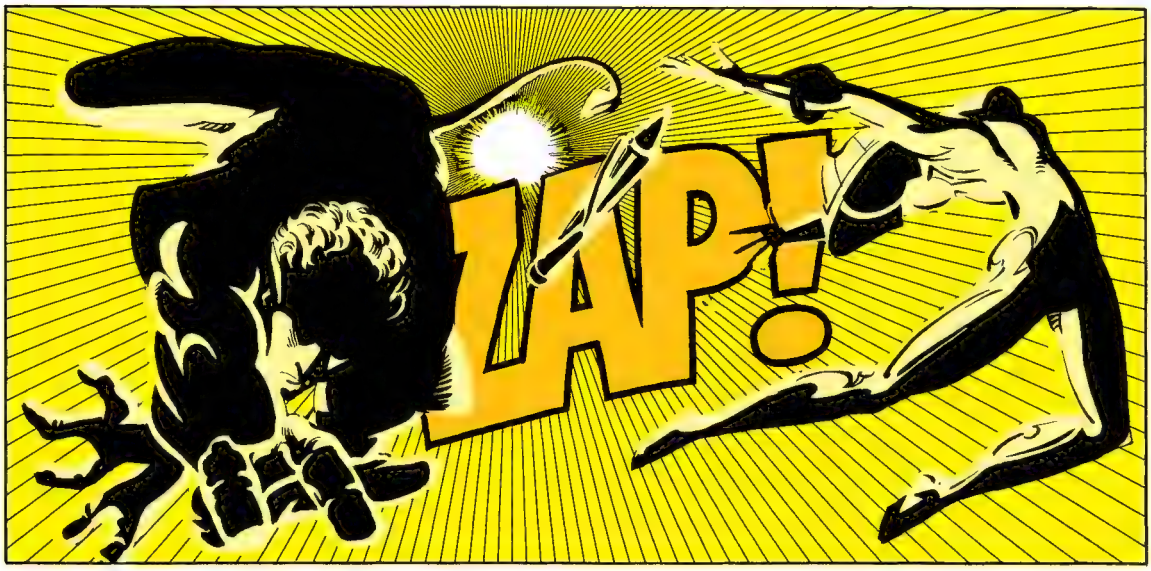

THE STARJAMMERS!
THE GREAT STARSHIP-- MANNED BY A CREW OF INTERSTELLAR FREEBOOTERS-- HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR THE X-MEN FOR WEEKS. TRUE TO FORM, THEY'VE ARRIVED IN THE PROVERBIAL NICK OF TIME.


THAT IS, TO SAVE STORM.
CYKE, WHERE'S KITTY?! I HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN A WHILE!
SHE KNEW THE RISKS, AND ACCEPTED THEM.
BUT IF YOU'RE SO CONCERNED, WOLVERINE, WHY DON'T YOU GO LOOK FOR HER.
I WISH I COULD, BUB-- BUT I GOT MORE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS. THE LONGER THIS FRACAS GOES ON, THE WORSE CYKE'S SHOOTIN' GETS-- HE'S MISSIN' ALL BUT THE EASIEST TARGETS -- LIKE HIS MIND KNOWS HOW TO USE HIS OPTIC BLASTS, BUT HIS BODY'S FORGOTTEN. HIS INSTINCTS ARE GONE!
IF I COULD ONLY CATCH HIS SCENT, THAT'D CLINCH MY SUSPICIONS-- BINGO!
WOLVERINE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
YOU MADMAN-- I'M NOT THE ENEMY!
WRONG, BUB. I'VE BEEN WORRYIN' SINCE WE STARTED ABOUT A TRAITOR IN THE GROUP--
--AN' I THINK I JUST FOUND ONE!


YOUR DISCOVERY WILL NOT SAVE YOU, HUMAN.
THE SAME TRANSFORMATION WHICH CLAIMS ME--
--WILL SOON CLAIM YOU ALL!
UNNNGNH!
WHUNNEFF!


CYCLOPS-- HE'S BECOME ONE OF THE BROOD!
HIS METAMORPHOSIS HAS GIVEN HIM VOLUNTARY CONTROL OVER HIS OPTIC BLASTS, AND A MUCH WIDER ARC OF FIRE.
COLOSSUS AND WOLVERINE ARE OUT OF ACTION. USE YOUR TELEPORT ABILITY TO KEEP HIM OCCUPIED, NIGHTCRAWLER. I AND MY ENERGY SWORD WILL DO THE REST.


NO, MAJESTRIX, I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T.


ZAP!

THE HOSTS ARE UNHARMED, REVERED MOTHER, AND BIOSCANS INDICATE THAT THE EMBRYOS ARE IN PERFECT CONDITION.

SPLENDID. SO NEAR THEIR GOAL--AND SUCCESS--AND YET SO FAR. SUCH A PITY.

I MUST CONFESS, DAUGHTER, THAT I AM IMPRESSED BY THE PROWESS OF YOUR COMPEERS. YOU MANAGED TO FRIGHTEN OFF THE PREDATORS THAT HAUNT THESE LOWER DEPTHS, A FEAT EVEN MY FINEST WARRIORS HAVE NEVER ACCOMPLISHED.

THEY'LL BE BACK.

BY WHICH TIME WE'LL BE LONG GONE.

WOLVERINE'S IMPLANT WAS DESTROYED. WILL YOU TRY AGAIN, OR SHALL I SLAY HIM?

NO, TO BOTH. HIS BODY'S MUTANT IMMUNE SYSTEM WILL AUTOMATICALLY ATTACK THAT EGG AS IT DID THE FIRST. AND I WANT THE PLEASURE OF KILLING HIM MYSELF. I SHALL EAT HIM ALIVE--HE WILL WATCH AS I CONSUME EACH SUCCULENT MORSEL.

FOR THE SERVICE YOU HAVE DONE ME, DAUGHTER, YOU MAY SHARE IN THE FEAST.

HUNT-MASTER, PREPARE THE PRISONERS FOR TRANSPORT. AS SOON AS WE RECAPTURE THE YOUNGLING, KITTY--

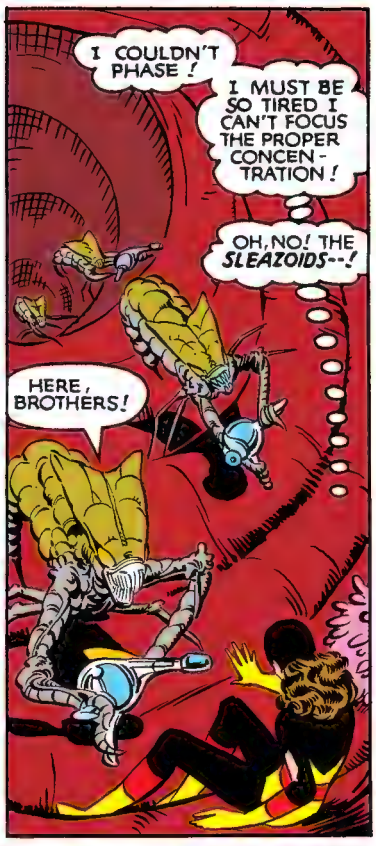
--WE WILL ASCEND TO THE ROYAL HIVE.

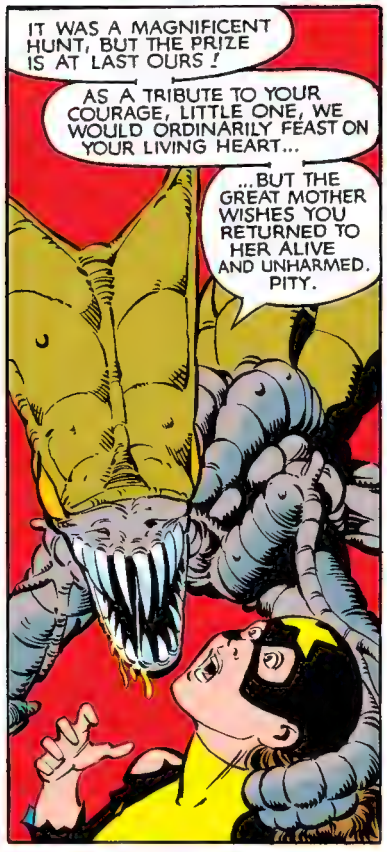
SPEAKING OF KITTY...

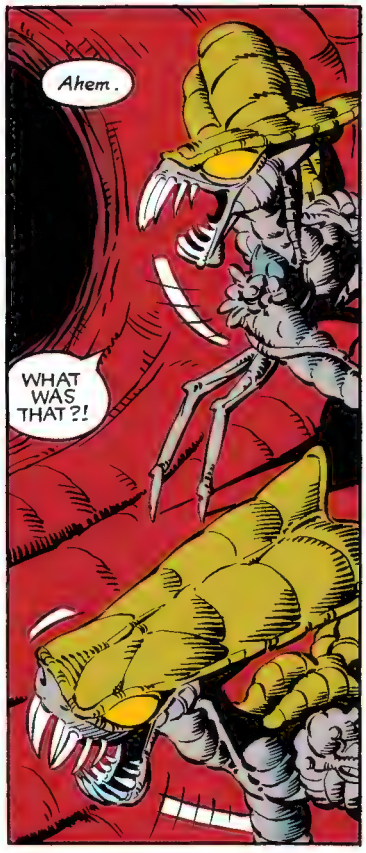
...SHE'S WONDERING IF LEAVING THE NEST WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA.

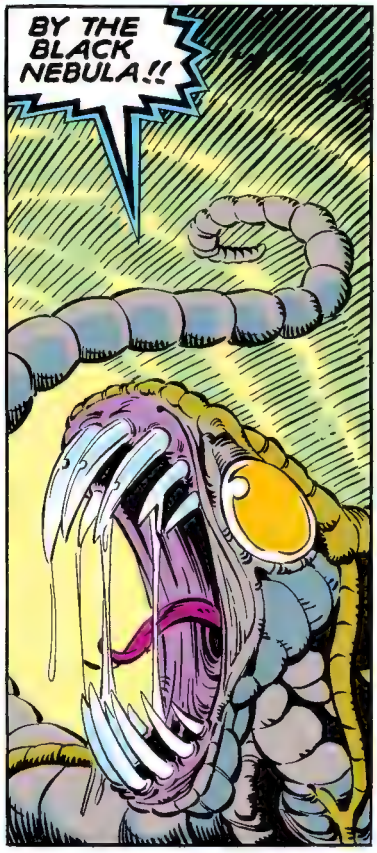
THERE ARE SLEAZOIDS EVERY-WHERE! THESE TUNNELS ARE FULL OF 'EM!
I'VE BEEN ON THE RUN SINCE THEY SPOTTED ME. DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN KEEP UP THIS PACE.

I THINK I'M LOST, TOO.
WNGNUMFF!

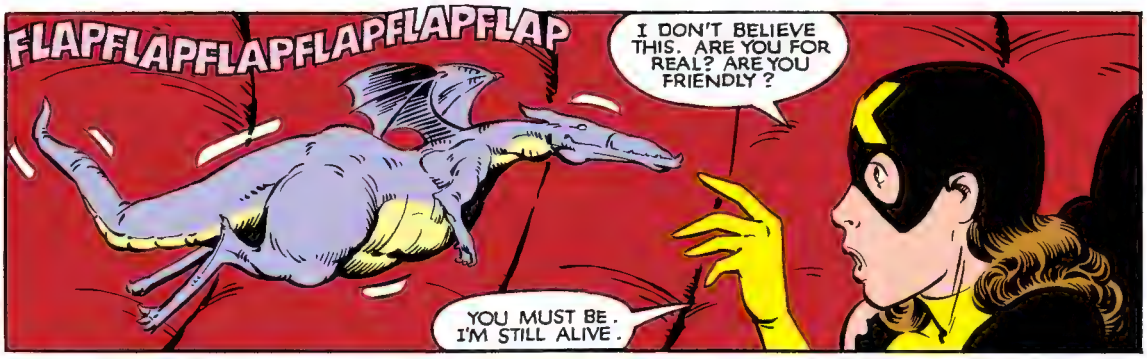

I COULDN'T PHASE!
I MUST BE SO TIRED I CAN'T FOCUS THE PROPER CONCEN-TRATION!
OH, NO! THE SLEAZOIDS--!
HERE, BROTHERS!

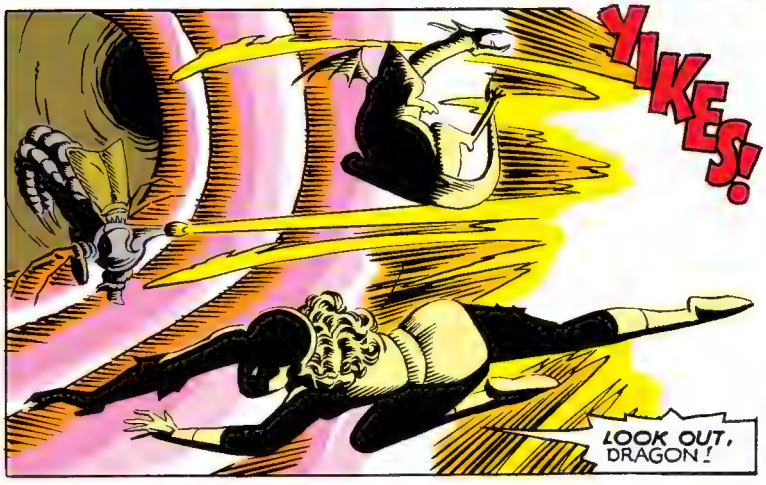

IT WAS A MAGNIFICENT HUNT, BUT THE PRIZE IS AT LAST OURS!
AS A TRIBUTE TO YOUR COURAGE, LITTLE ONE, WE WOULD ORDINARILY FEAST ON YOUR LIVING HEART...
...BUT THE GREAT MOTHER WISHES YOU RETURNED TO HER ALIVE AND UNHARMED. PITY.


Ahem.
WHAT WAS THAT?!

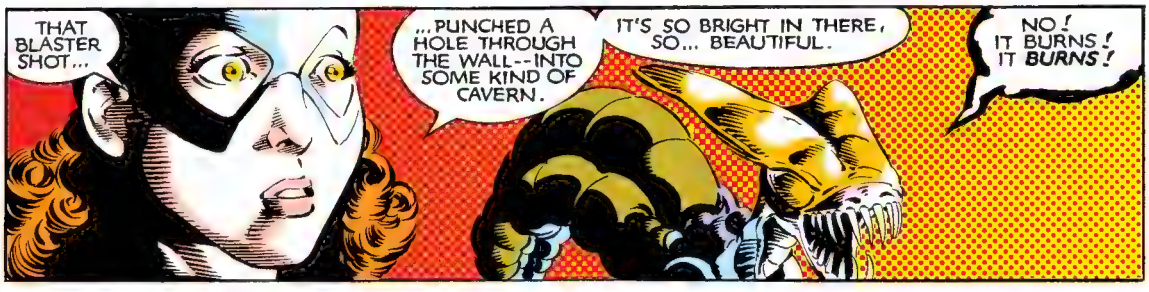

BY THE BLACK NEBULA!!

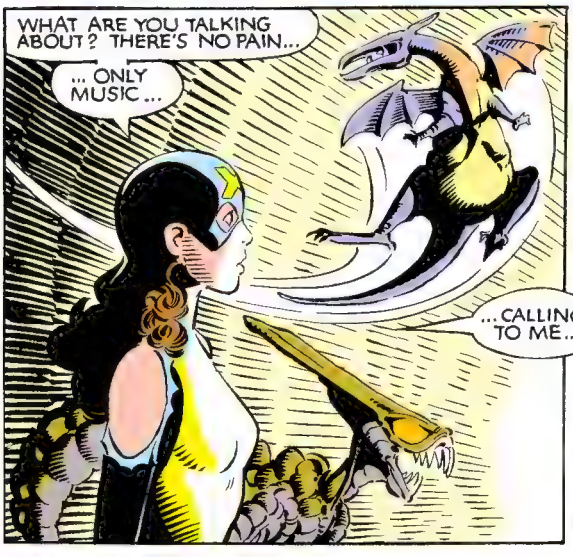
ROAR
FLEE, BROTHERS!

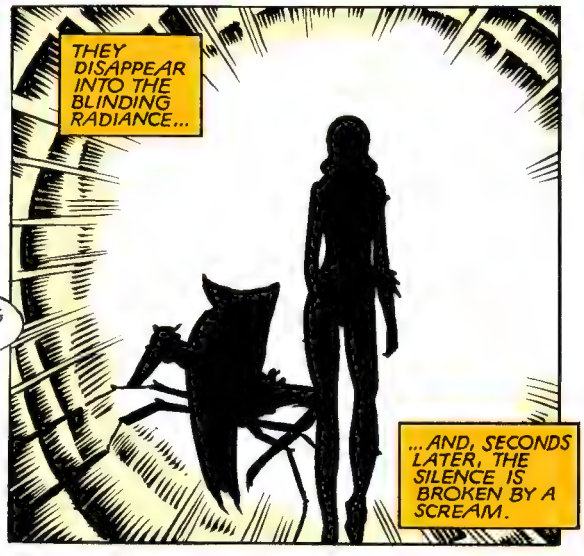

FLAPFLAPFLAPFLAPFLAPFLAP
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. ARE YOU FOR REAL? ARE YOU FRIENDLY?
YOU MUST BE. I'M STILL ALIVE.

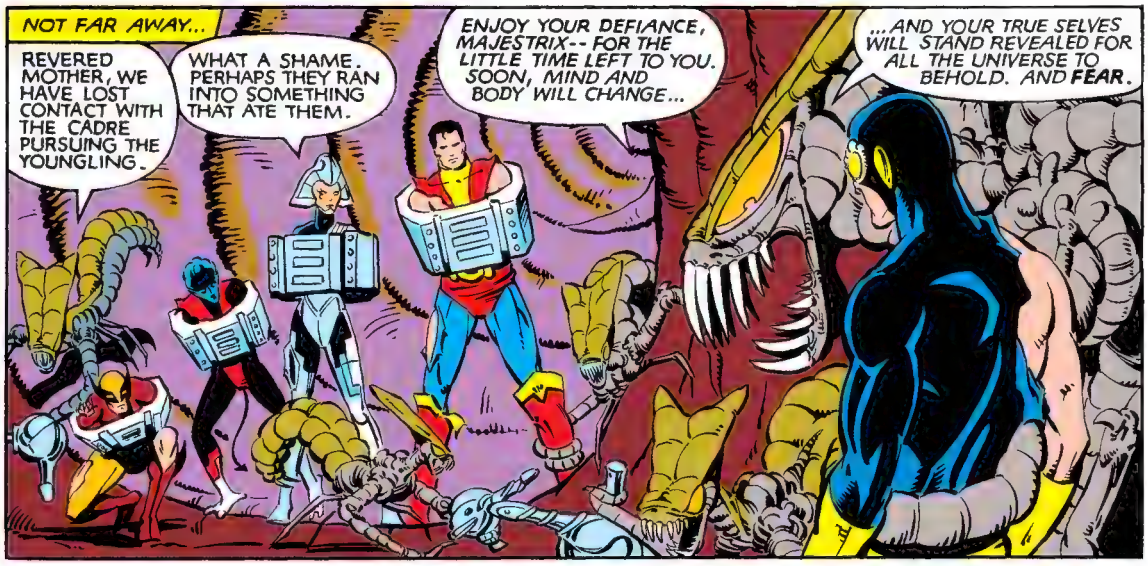

YIKES!
LOOK OUT, DRAGON!

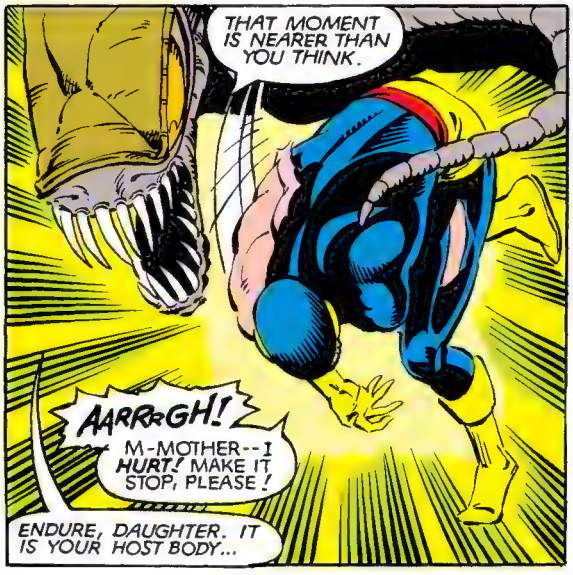
HUH--?!?

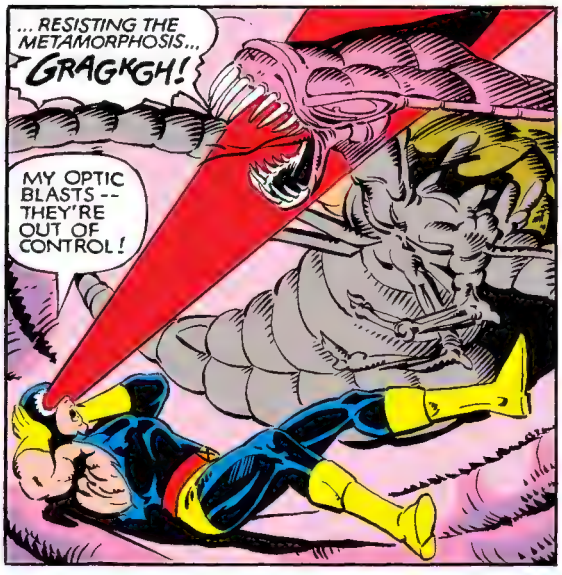

THAT BLASTER SHOT...
...PUNCHED A HOLE THROUGH THE WALL--INTO SOME KIND OF CAVERN.
IT'S SO BRIGHT IN THERE, SO... BEAUTIFUL.
NO! IT BURNS! IT BURNS!

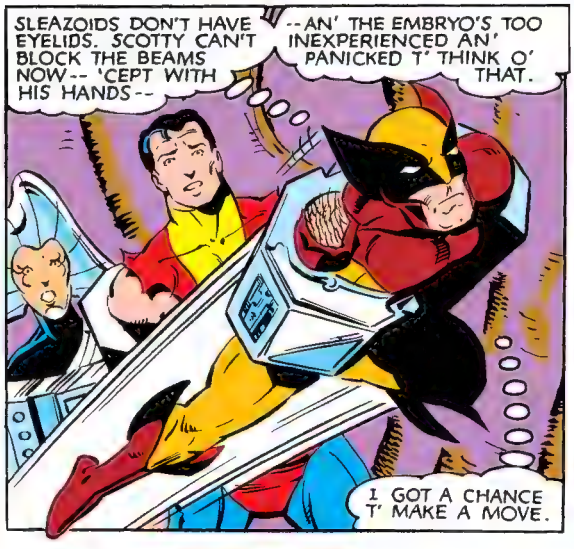

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THERE'S NO PAIN...
... ONLY MUSIC...
...CALLING TO ME...


THEY DISAPPEAR INTO THE BLINDING RADIANCE...
...AND, SECONDS LATER, THE SILENCE IS BROKEN BY A SCREAM.


NOT FAR AWAY...
REVERED MOTHER, WE HAVE LOST CONTACT WITH THE CADRE PURSUING THE YOUNGLING.
WHAT A SHAME. PERHAPS THEY RAN INTO SOMETHING THAT ATE THEM.
ENJOY YOUR DEFIANCE, MAJESTRIX-- FOR THE LITTLE TIME LEFT TO YOU. SOON, MIND AND BODY WILL CHANGE...
...AND YOUR TRUE SELVES WILL STAND REVEALED FOR ALL THE UNIVERSE TO BEHOLD. AND FEAR.


THAT MOMENT IS NEARER THAN YOU THINK.
AARRRGH!
M-MOTHER--I HURT! MAKE IT STOP, PLEASE!
ENDURE, DAUGHTER. IT IS YOUR HOST BODY...

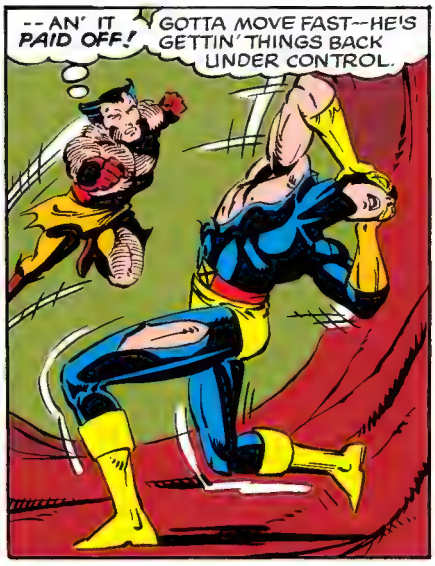

...RESISTING THE METAMORPHOSIS...
GRAGKGH!
MY OPTIC BLASTS -- THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL!

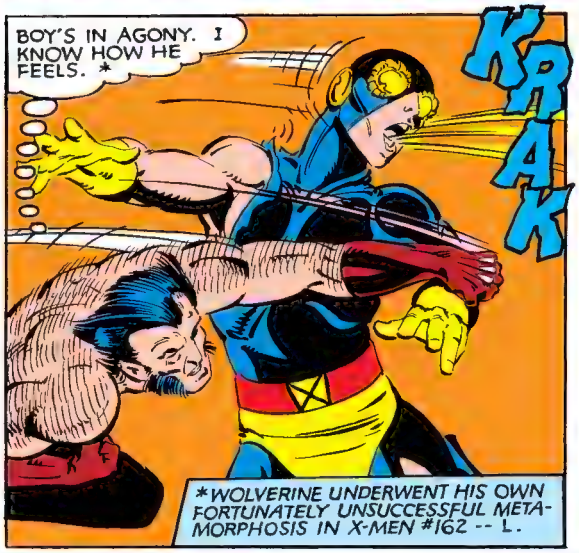

SLEAZOIDS DON'T HAVE EYELIDS. SCOTTY CAN'T BLOCK THE BEAMS NOW-- 'CEPT WITH HIS HANDS--
--AN' THE EMBRYO'S TOO INEXPERIENCED AN' PANICKED T' THINK O' THAT.
I GOT A CHANCE T' MAKE A MOVE.

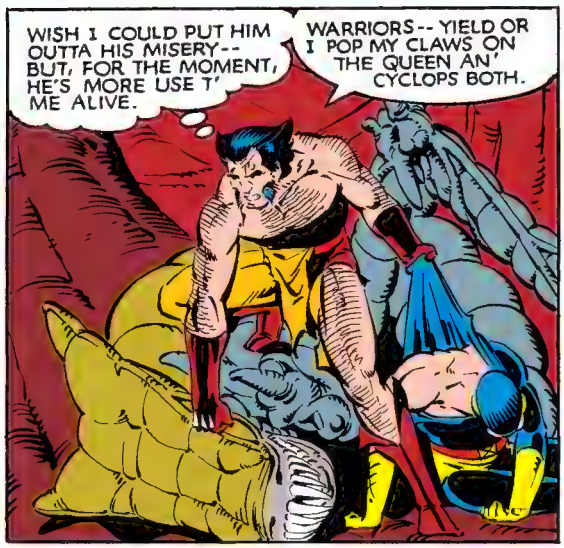
WOLVERINE! I'VE KILLED HIM!

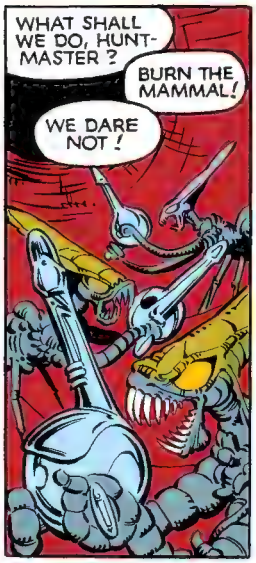
NOT HARDLY, BUB.
I MOVED SO A GLANCING BLOW FROM THOSE BEAMS O' CYKE'S WOULD TRASH MY SHACKLES.

IF I'D CAUGHT A FULL BLAST, I'D O' BEEN NOTHIN' BUT PULP AN' ADAMANTIUM BONES. IT WAS AN ALL-'R-NOTHIN' LONGSHOT-- MY KIND'A GAMBLE--

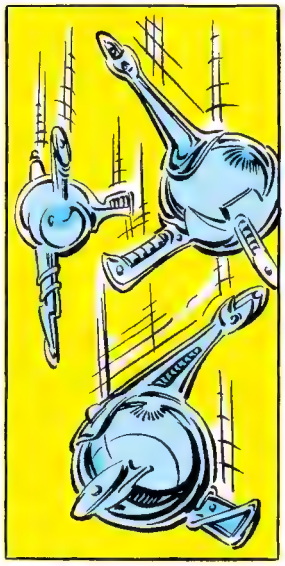

--AN' IT PAID OFF!
GOTTA MOVE FAST--HE'S GETTIN' THINGS BACK UNDER CONTROL.


BOY'S IN AGONY. I KNOW HOW HE FEELS. *
KRAK
*WOLVERINE UNDERWENT HIS OWN FORTUNATELY UNSUCCESSFUL METAMORPHOSIS IN X-MEN #162 -- L.

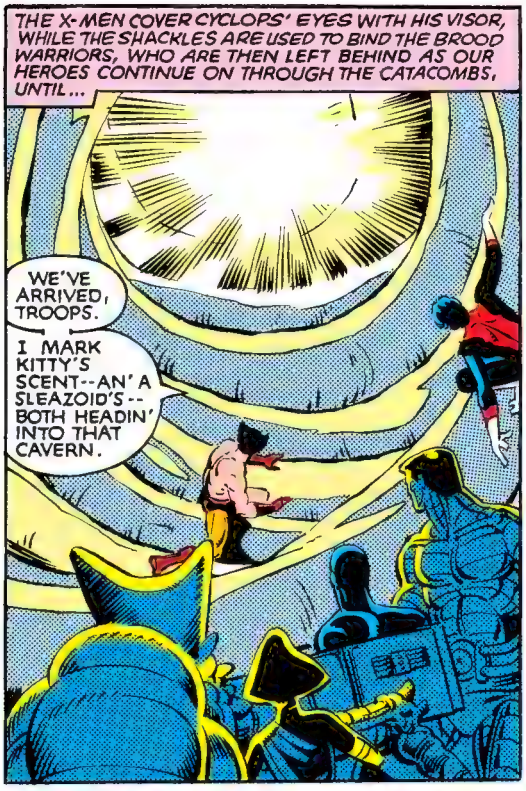

WISH I COULD PUT HIM OUTTA HIS MISERY-- BUT, FOR THE MOMENT, HE'S MORE USE T' ME ALIVE.
WARRIORS-- YIELD OR I POP MY CLAWS ON THE QUEEN AN' CYCLOPS BOTH.

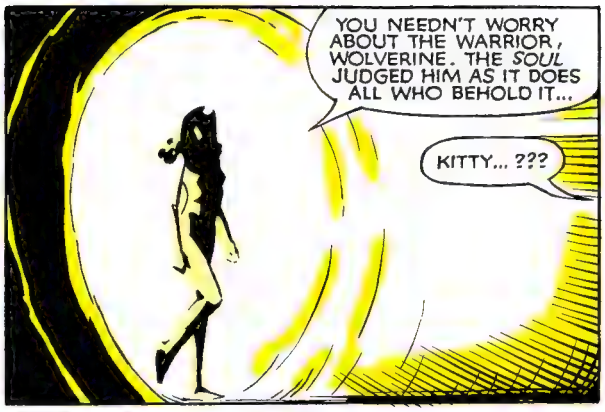

WHAT SHALL WE DO, HUNT-MASTER ?
BURN THE MAMMAL!
WE DARE NOT !

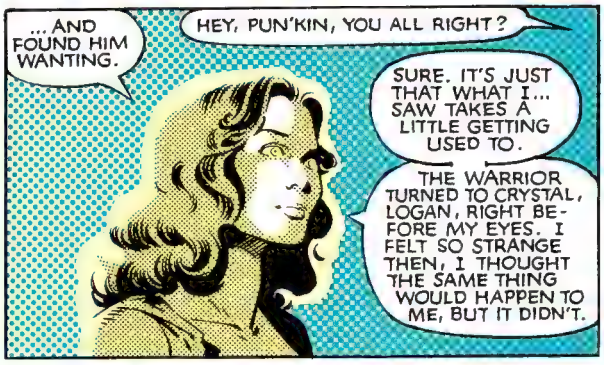
DROP THE WEAPONS, CREEPS--
--OR SHE DIES!

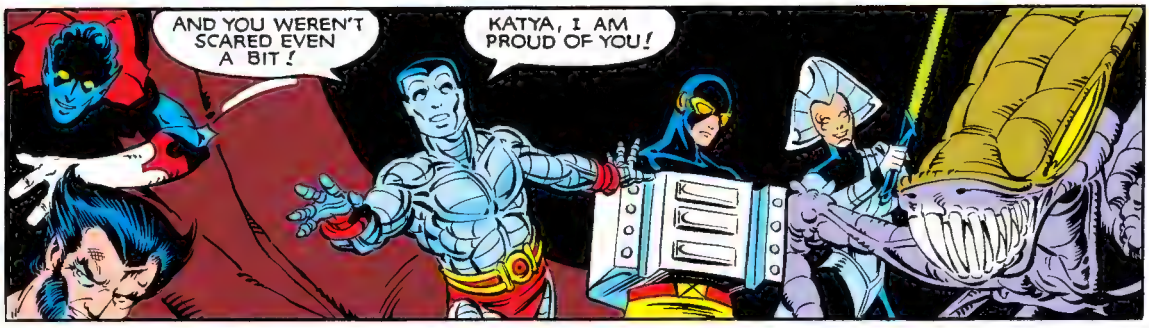


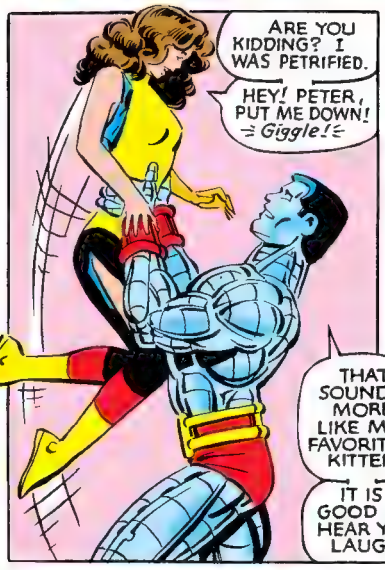
SMART MOVE.
NOW RELEASE THE X-MEN.


THE X-MEN COVER CYCLOPS' EYES WITH HIS VISOR, WHILE THE SHACKLES ARE USED TO BIND THE BROOD WARRIORS, WHO ARE THEN LEFT BEHIND AS OUR HEROES CONTINUE ON THROUGH THE CATACOMBS, UNTIL...
WE'VE ARRIVED, TROOPS.
I MARK KITTY'S SCENT--AN' A SLEAZOID'S--BOTH HEADIN' INTO THAT CAVERN.

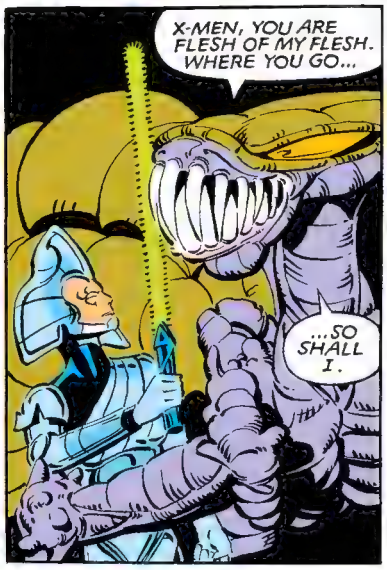

YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE WARRIOR, WOLVERINE. THE SOUL JUDGED HIM AS IT DOES ALL WHO BEHOLD IT...
KITTY... ???

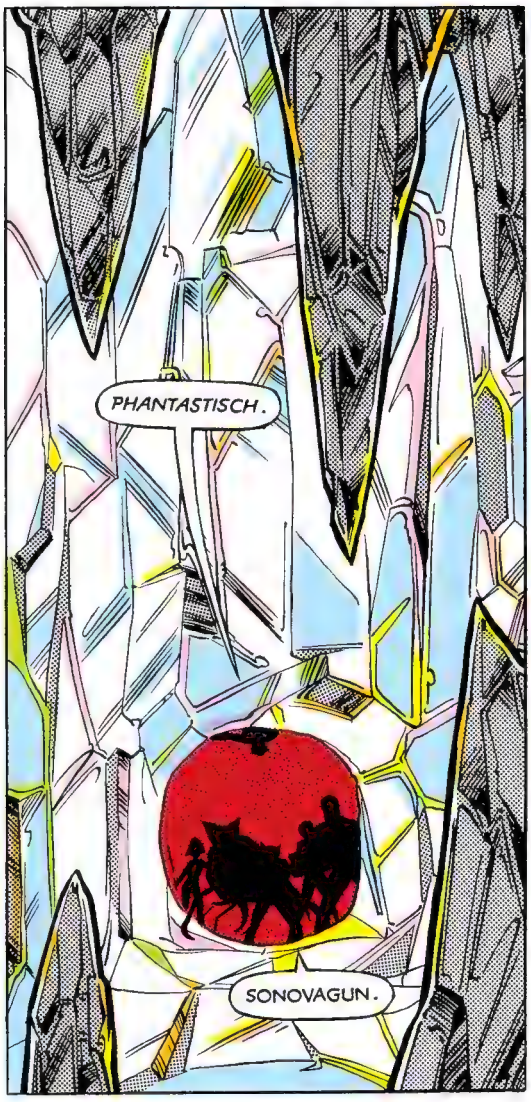

HEY, PUN'KIN, YOU ALL RIGHT?
...AND FOUND HIM WANTING.
SURE. IT'S JUST THAT WHAT I... SAW TAKES A LITTLE GETTING USED TO.
THE WARRIOR TURNED TO CRYSTAL, LOGAN, RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES. I FELT SO STRANGE THEN, I THOUGHT THE SAME THING WOULD HAPPEN TO ME, BUT IT DIDN'T.

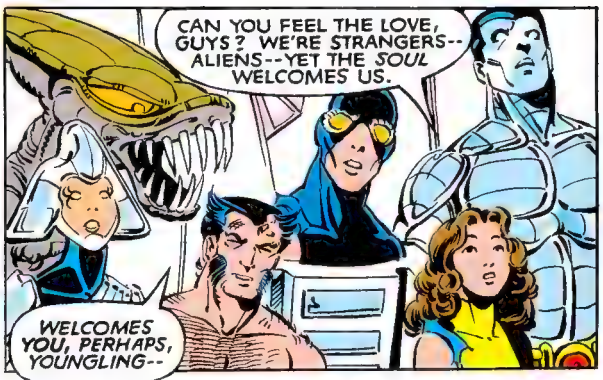

AND YOU WEREN'T SCARED EVEN A BIT!
KATYA, I AM PROUD OF YOU!


ARE YOU KIDDING? I WAS PETRIFIED.
HEY! PETER, PUT ME DOWN! ≈Giggle!≈
THAT SOUNDS MORE LIKE MY FAVORITE KITTEN.
IT IS GOOD TO HEAR YOU LAUGH.

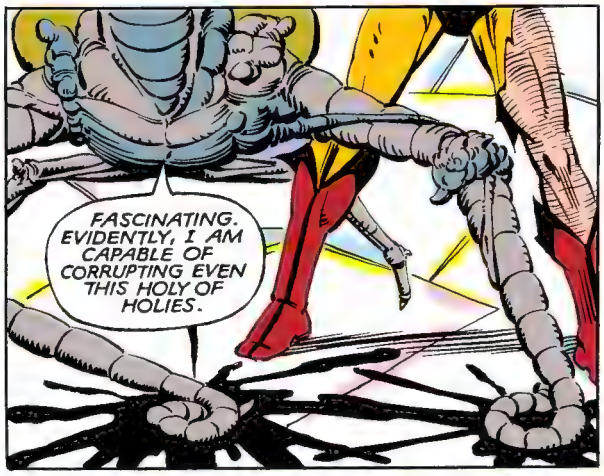
I'M GLAD I'M STILL ABLE TO.
I FIGURE I WASN'T AFFECTED BECAUSE I'M STILL FUNDAMENTALLY HUMAN. BUT MAYBE WE'D BETTER LEAVE THE QUEEN OUTSIDE.
BY THE WAY, ANYONE SEE A LITTLE... CRITTER FLYING AROUND HERE?
NOPE. WHY?
Oh... NOTHING IMPORTANT.

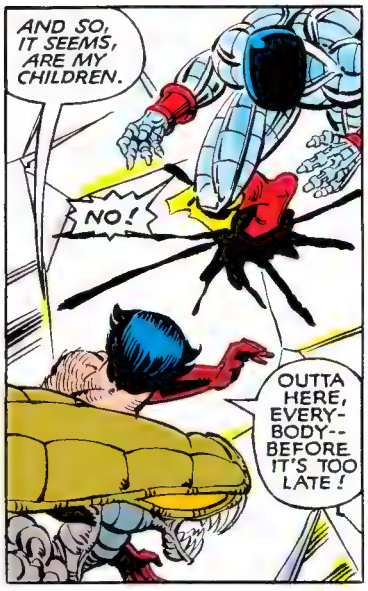

X-MEN, YOU ARE FLESH OF MY FLESH. WHERE YOU GO...
...SO SHALL I.

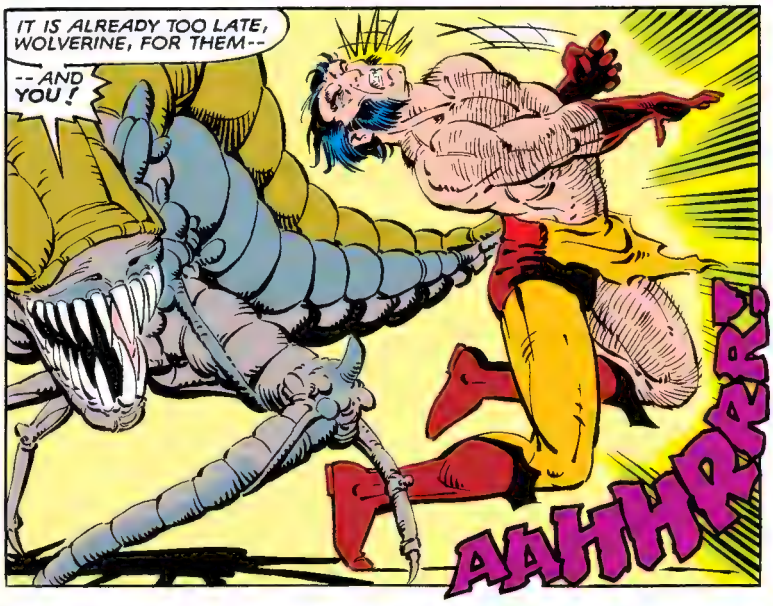

PHANTASTISCH.
SONOVAGUN.

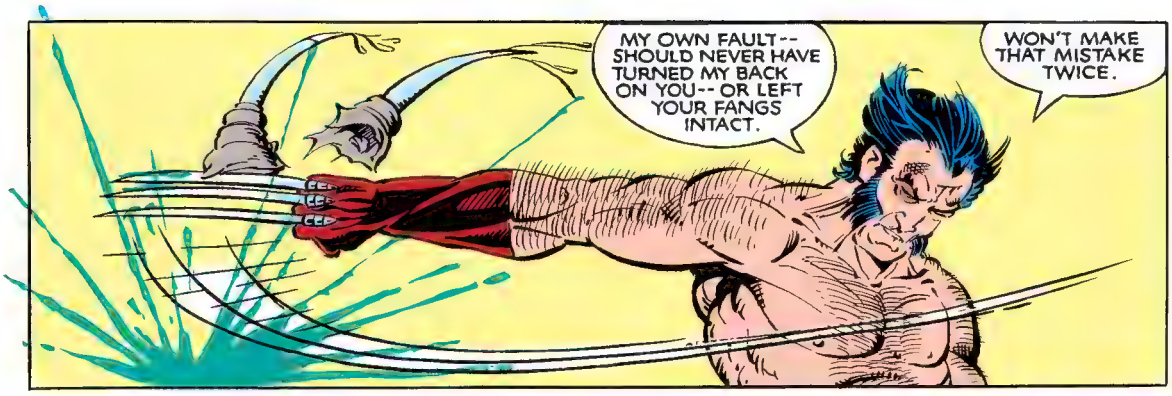

CAN YOU FEEL THE LOVE, GUYS? WE'RE STRANGERS--ALIENS--YET THE *SOUL* WELCOMES US.
WELCOMES YOU, PERHAPS, YOUNGLING--

--BUT I SENSE ONLY A HATRED AS DEEP AND ABIDING AS MY OWN.
BY THE WHITE WOLF!
COMRADES, LOOK AT THE CRYSTAL BENEATH THE QUEEN!


FASCINATING. EVIDENTLY, I AM CAPABLE OF CORRUPTING EVEN THIS HOLY OF HOLIES.


AND SO, IT SEEMS, ARE MY CHILDREN.
NO!
OUTTA HERE, EVERY-BODY--BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

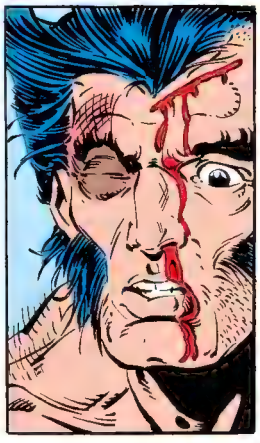

IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE, WOLVERINE, FOR THEM--
--AND YOU!
AAHHRRR!

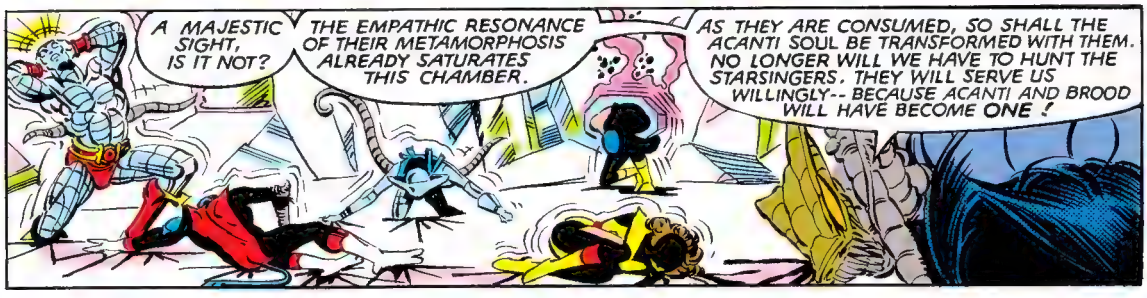

MY OWN FAULT-- SHOULD NEVER HAVE TURNED MY BACK ON YOU-- OR LEFT YOUR FANGS INTACT.
WON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE TWICE.

TRUE, LITTLE MAN-- FOR YOU ARE ABOUT TO DIE.

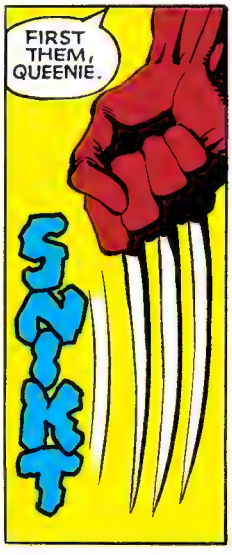
NOT... YET, MAMA!
TOOK ONE HECKUVA JOLT-- MAYBE MORE VENOM THAN MY SYSTEM CAN HANDLE.

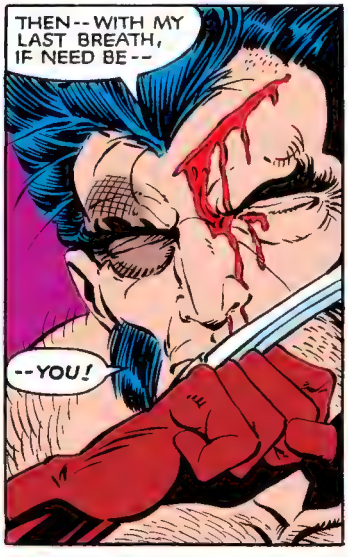
BUT I AIN'T LETTIN' THAT STOP ME. NOT 'TIL I'VE DONE...

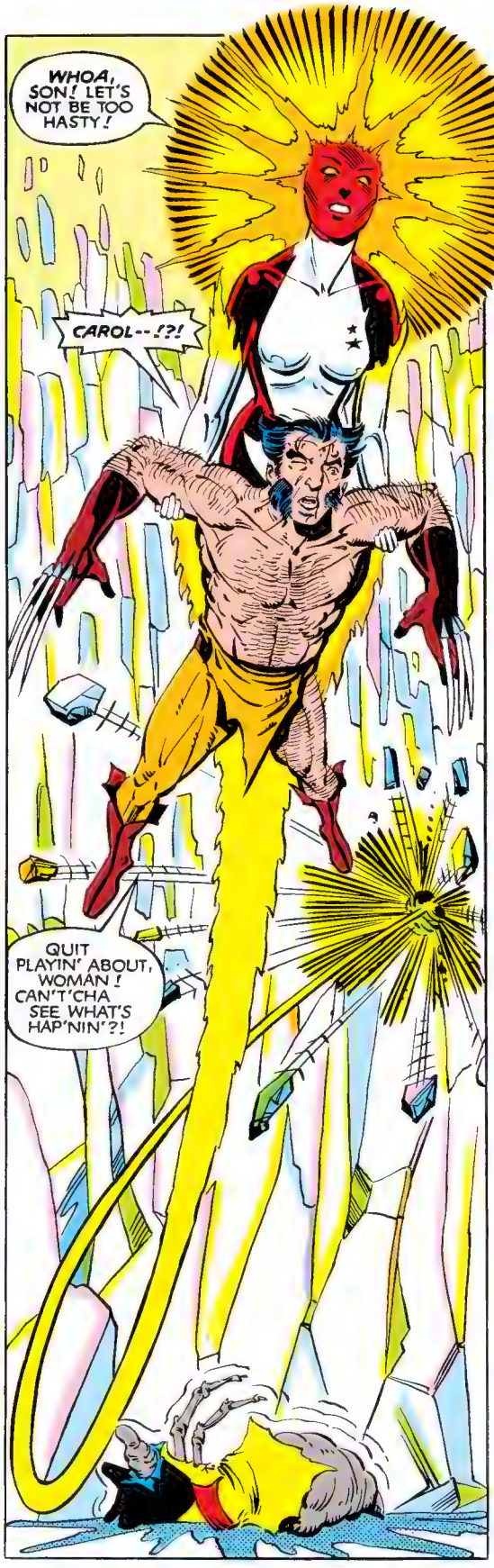


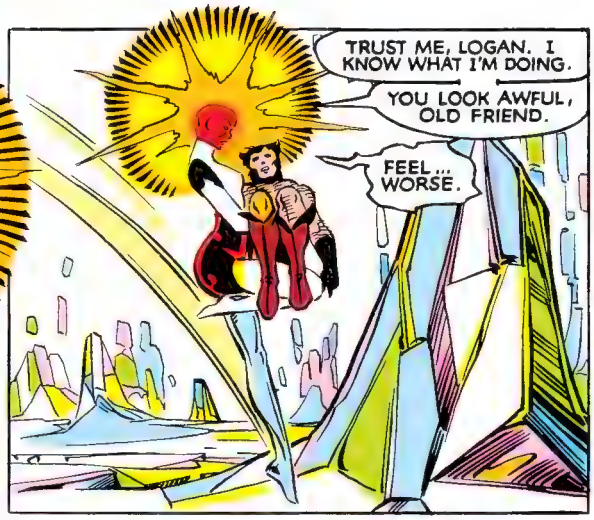

A MAJESTIC SIGHT, IS IT NOT?
THE EMPATHIC RESONANCE OF THEIR METAMORPHOSIS ALREADY SATURATES THIS CHAMBER.
AS THEY ARE CONSUMED, SO SHALL THE ACANTI SOUL BE TRANSFORMED WITH THEM. NO LONGER WILL WE HAVE TO HUNT THE STARSINGERS. THEY WILL SERVE US WILLINGLY-- BECAUSE ACANTI AND BROOD WILL HAVE BECOME ONE!

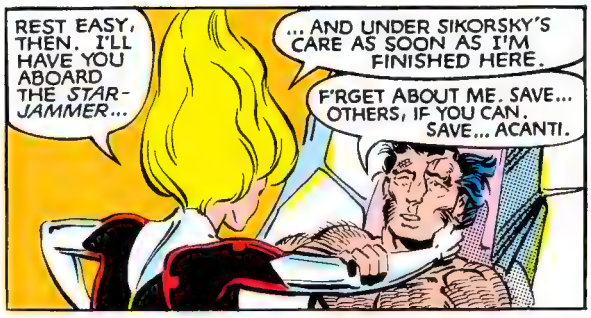
OUR RULE WILL SPREAD ACROSS THE STARS, OUR MANIFEST DESTINY FULFILLED!
WANNA... BET?

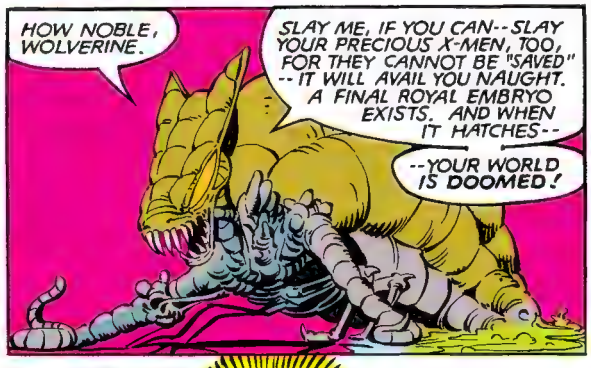

FIRST THEM, QUEENIE.
SNIKT

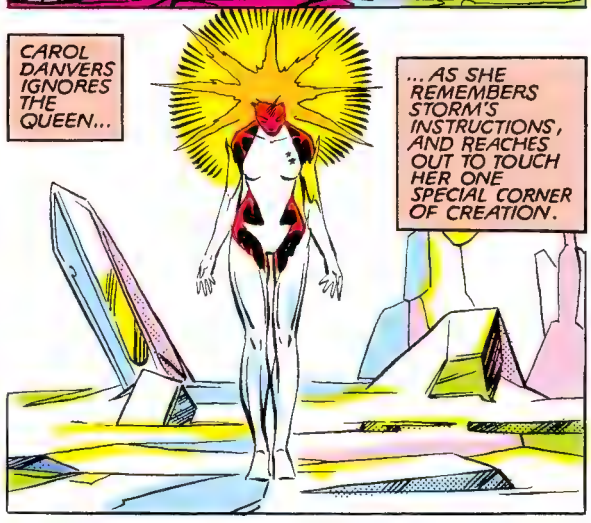

THEN-- WITH MY LAST BREATH, IF NEED BE--
--YOU!

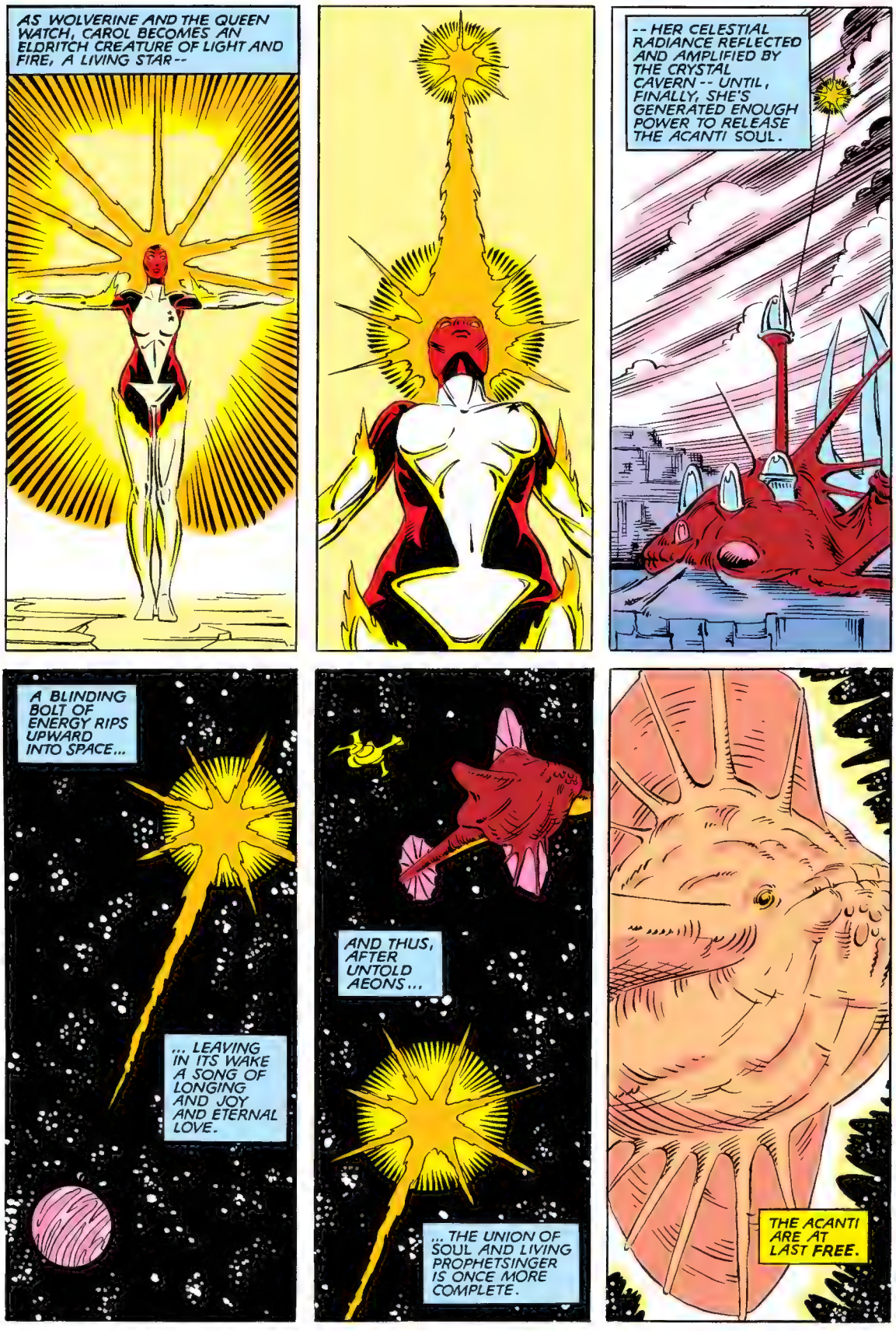

WHOA, SON! LET'S NOT BE TOO HASTY!
CAROL--!?!
QUIT PLAYIN' ABOUT, WOMAN! CAN'T'CHA SEE WHAT'S HAP'NIN'?!


TRUST ME, LOGAN. I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.
YOU LOOK AWFUL, OLD FRIEND.
FEEL... WORSE.

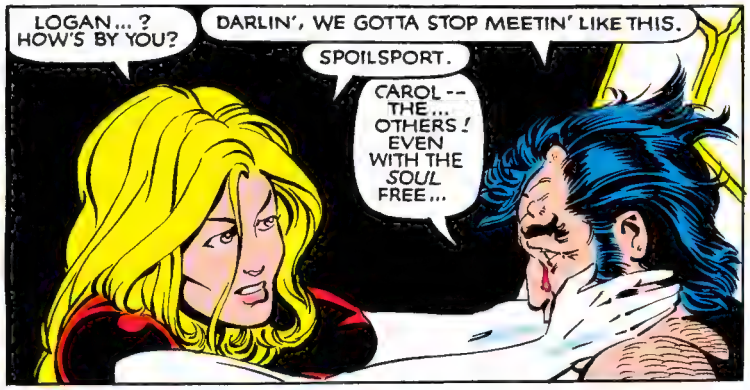

REST EASY, THEN. I'LL HAVE YOU ABOARD THE STAR-JAMMER...
... AND UNDER SIKORSKY'S CARE AS SOON AS I'M FINISHED HERE.
F'RGET ABOUT ME. SAVE... OTHERS, IF YOU CAN. SAVE... ACANTI.

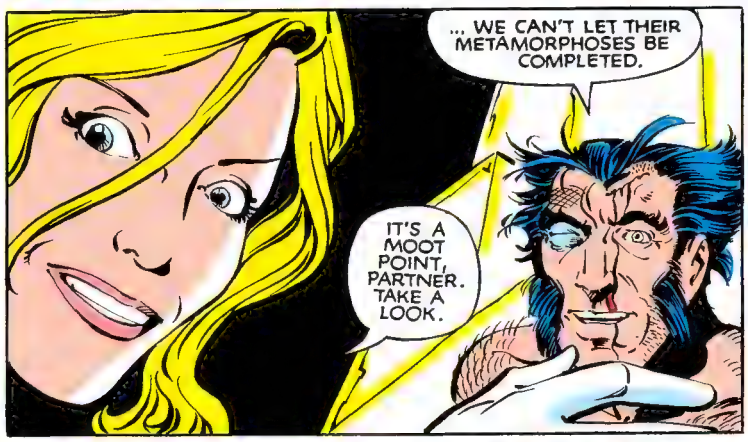

HOW NOBLE, WOLVERINE.
SLAY ME, IF YOU CAN--SLAY YOUR PRECIOUS X-MEN, TOO, FOR THEY CANNOT BE "SAVED" --IT WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT. A FINAL ROYAL EMBRYO EXISTS. AND WHEN IT HATCHES--
--YOUR WORLD IS DOOMED!

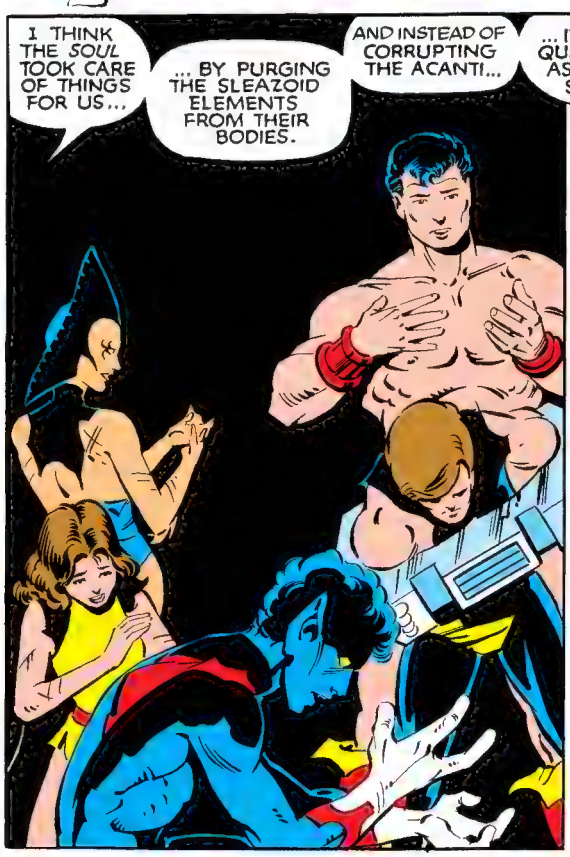

CAROL DANVERS IGNORES THE QUEEN...
... AS SHE REMEMBERS STORM'S INSTRUCTIONS, AND REACHES OUT TO TOUCH HER ONE SPECIAL CORNER OF CREATION.

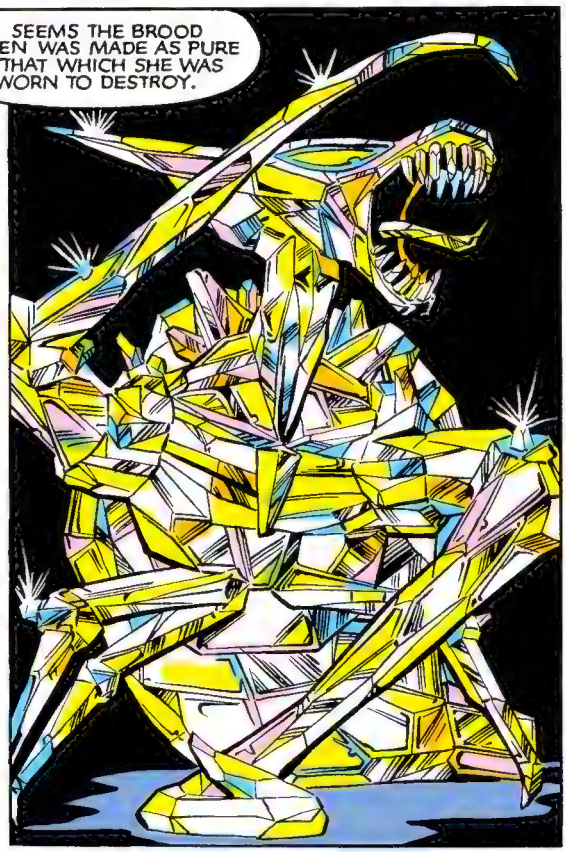

AS WOLVERINE AND THE QUEEN WATCH, CAROL BECOMES AN ELDRITCH CREATURE OF LIGHT AND FIRE, A LIVING STAR--
-- HER CELESTIAL RADIANCE REFLECTED AND AMPLIFIED BY THE CRYSTAL CAVERN -- UNTIL, FINALLY, SHE'S GENERATED ENOUGH POWER TO RELEASE THE ACANTI SOUL.
A BLINDING BOLT OF ENERGY RIPS UPWARD INTO SPACE...
... LEAVING IN ITS WAKE A SONG OF LONGING AND JOY AND ETERNAL LOVE.
AND THUS, AFTER UNTOLD AEONS...
... THE UNION OF SOUL AND LIVING PROPHETSINGER IS ONCE MORE COMPLETE.
THE ACANTI ARE AT LAST FREE.

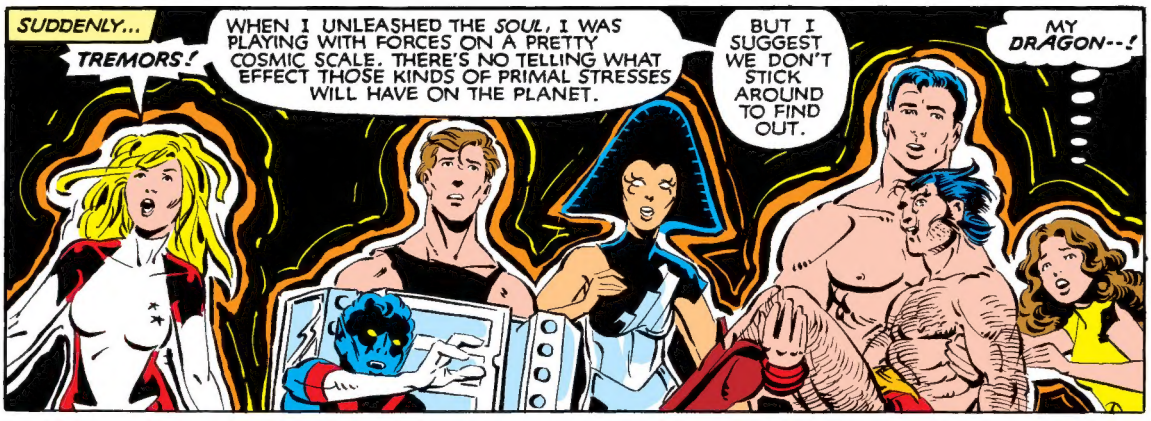
Oh...
... MY!
NOT BAD, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF. BEATS MY LAST BIG STUNT ALL HOLLOW. *
I'VE NEVER FELT SO WRECKED-- I CAN BARELY STAND-- BUT IT WAS WORTH IT.
*SEE X-MEN #164 -- LOUISE.

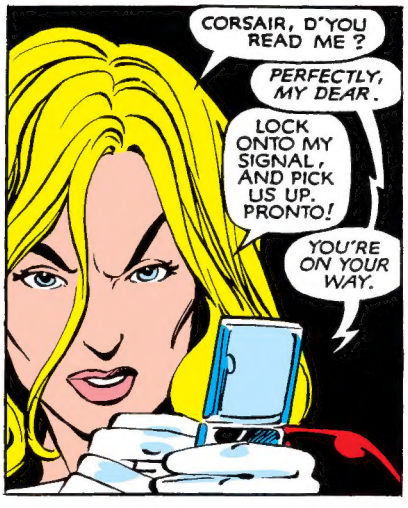

LOGAN... ? HOW'S BY YOU?
DARLIN', WE GOTTA STOP MEETIN' LIKE THIS.
SPOILSPORT.
CAROL -- THE... OTHERS! EVEN WITH THE SOUL FREE...

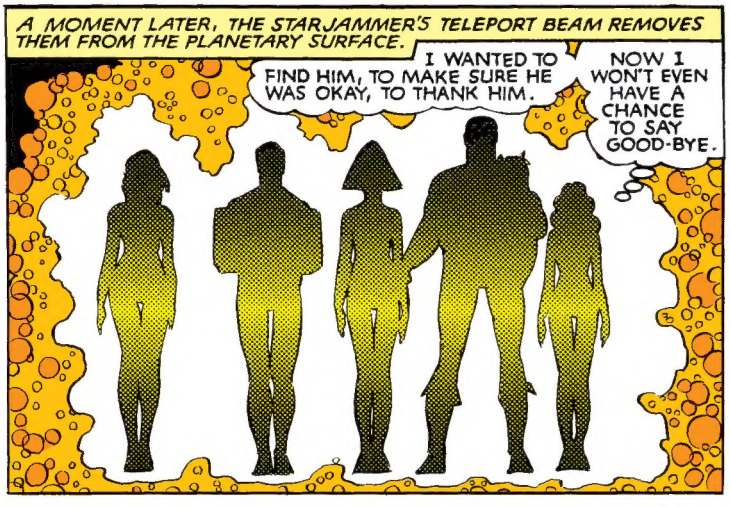

... WE CAN'T LET THEIR METAMORPHOSES BE COMPLETED.
IT'S A MOOT POINT, PARTNER. TAKE A LOOK.

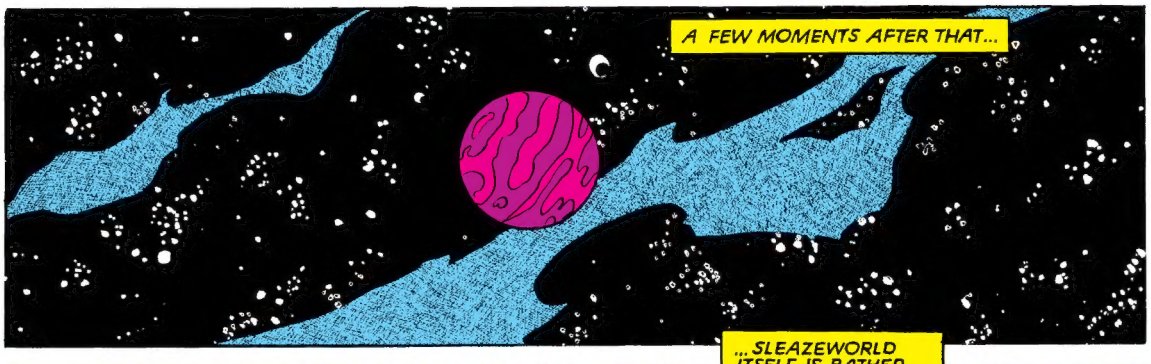

I THINK THE SOUL TOOK CARE OF THINGS FOR US...
... BY PURGING THE SLEAZOID ELEMENTS FROM THEIR BODIES.
AND INSTEAD OF CORRUPTING THE ACANTI...


... IT SEEMS THE BROOD QUEEN WAS MADE AS PURE AS THAT WHICH SHE WAS SWORN TO DESTROY.

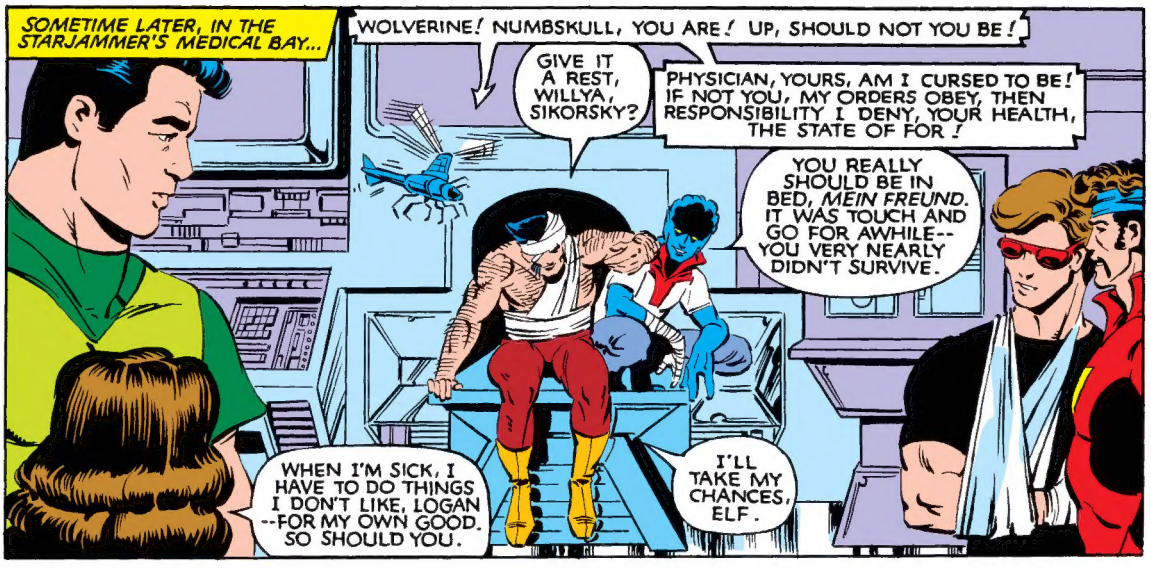

SUDDENLY...
TREMORS!
WHEN I UNLEASHED THE SOUL, I WAS PLAYING WITH FORCES ON A PRETTY COSMIC SCALE. THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT EFFECT THOSE KINDS OF PRIMAL STRESSES WILL HAVE ON THE PLANET.
BUT I SUGGEST WE DON'T STICK AROUND TO FIND OUT.
MY DRAGON--!

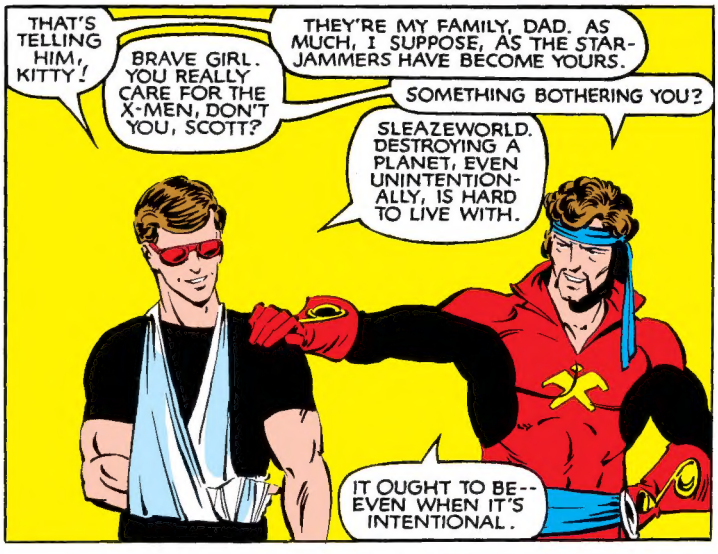

CORSAIR, D'YOU READ ME?
PERFECTLY, MY DEAR.
LOCK ONTO MY SIGNAL, AND PICK US UP. PRONTO!
YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY.


A MOMENT LATER, THE STARJAMMER'S TELEPORT BEAM REMOVES THEM FROM THE PLANETARY SURFACE.
I WANTED TO FIND HIM, TO MAKE SURE HE WAS OKAY, TO THANK HIM.
NOW I WON'T EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY GOOD-BYE.


A FEW MOMENTS AFTER THAT...

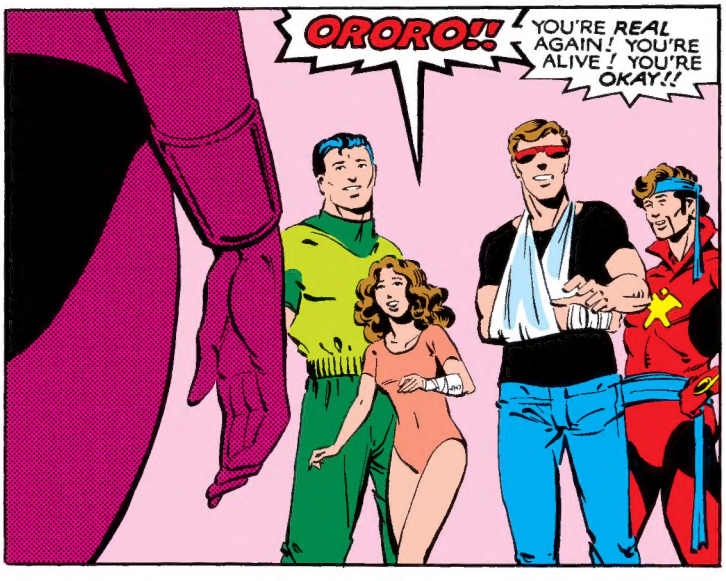
...SLEAZEWORLD ITSELF IS RATHER ABRUPTLY REMOVED FROM THE CELESTIAL STAGE.

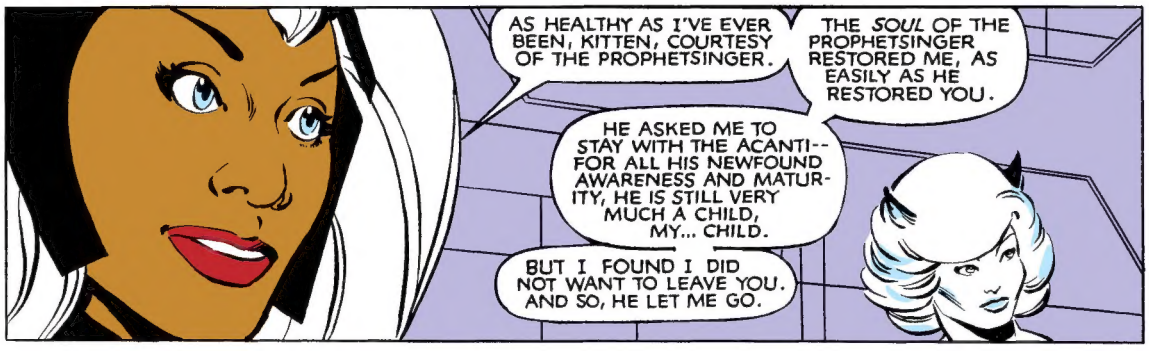

SOMETIME LATER, IN THE STARJAMMER'S MEDICAL BAY...
WOLVERINE! NUMBSKULL, YOU ARE! UP, SHOULD NOT YOU BE!
GIVE IT A REST, WILLYA, SIKORSKY?
PHYSICIAN, YOURS, AM I CURSED TO BE! IF NOT YOU, MY ORDERS OBEY, THEN RESPONSIBILITY I DENY, YOUR HEALTH, THE STATE OF FOR!
YOU REALLY SHOULD BE IN BED, MEIN FREUND. IT WAS TOUCH AND GO FOR AWHILE-- YOU VERY NEARLY DIDN'T SURVIVE.
WHEN I'M SICK, I HAVE TO DO THINGS I DON'T LIKE, LOGAN --FOR MY OWN GOOD. SO SHOULD YOU.
I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES, ELF.


THAT'S TELLING HIM, KITTY!
BRAVE GIRL. YOU REALLY CARE FOR THE X-MEN, DON'T YOU, SCOTT?
THEY'RE MY FAMILY, DAD. AS MUCH, I SUPPOSE, AS THE STAR-JAMMERS HAVE BECOME YOURS.
SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
SLEAZEWORLD. DESTROYING A PLANET, EVEN UNINTENTION-ALLY, IS HARD TO LIVE WITH.
IT OUGHT TO BE-- EVEN WHEN IT'S INTENTIONAL.

YOU BALANCE THE LIVES SACRIFICED WHEN SLEAZE-WORLD DIED WITH THOSE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST HAD WE DONE NOTHING AND ALLOWED THE ACANTI TO CONTINUE TO BE HUNTED, THE BROOD TO EXPAND. AND YOU PRAY YOU DID THE RIGHT THING.
CORSAIR...
YES, HEPZIBAH?
SURPRISE.

HELLO.


ORORO!!
YOU'RE REAL AGAIN! YOU'RE ALIVE! YOU'RE OKAY!!



TO BE CONCLUDED IN 30 DAYS -- AS THE X-MEN MEET

THE NEW MUTANTS IN...

THE GOLDILOCKS SYNDROME!

MINUTEMEN

Sy13nt
Bob